Edokko no Lạ̄nnaa†

Kippu Chaban
(Kit Tiyapan)

>: Kittix

† This spelling 'Lạ̄nnaa' used in the title is Lanna. Compare this with the Thai spelling of the same word, 'Lạ̄nṇa' and the English 'Lanna'. 'Lạ̄nnaạ' is the obsolescent form of 'Lạ̄nnaa', while 'Lạ̄nna' and 'Lạ̄nnaa' are both Lanna but are different in their meaning. On the other hand, even though the combination 'Lạ̄nṇa' is never impossible in Lanna, in practice it is never used. I wonder whether it is incorrect according to the grammatical rules of Lanna.

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¶ '1564/11 Th. Prajạrạjsạy 1, Bạngzụ̀e, Krungdẹ̀b 10800', in Thai (but please use the English spelling as postmen never understand).

With the help of Amanda, Vuḍhijay and Maṇob I come to Japan in September 1995. With 50 kilogrammes of luggage I board a JAL flight in Manchester for Tokyo. All my belongings are five items, that is four bags and a rucksack. I must have been a sight to see, like a Hollywood Rambo, with two big bags in my hands, two more hanging from my shoulders and a knapsack on my back. Amazingly enough I was let on board the vehicle with no fines, 'I am a poor student leaving England to take up a scholarship in Japan. I do not want to leave anything behind', I explained to everyone.

I like flying, especially in a long flight. I am a rather disorganised man who always runs around here and there doing things. I live alone and so have to do everything by myself, not unlike an island even though I have always lived my life in a city. So the only time when I can relax is when I fly. Is it not sad to think that the only place on earth where this poor writer can reflect terrorists try to turn into a hideous political battle ground. To be fair to my other hobbies, swimming, for example, is also relaxing. I have been a part-time addict of swimming for several years now, and will soon become a full-time one at the Tokyo Institute of Technology to which I am going to be attached for a few years.

I look again at the documents from Japan's Ministry of Education, and discover that there are two kinds of scholarship students only one of which had to pass some examinations. Myself, I belong to the other type who are nominated not tested. On one page it says in an English translation, 'Unless you have been tested you have to find your own way from the Narita Airport to your destination in Japan, wherever that is'. That flabbergasts me, or would I rather say that I feel astonished when I see this. I try with my dictionary to read the other page which is written in Japanese, only to find that it probably says something very similar to what I have read earlier.

There is nothing to worry, since there are instructions describing how one could perform the feat, that is to say, to travel on one own having arrived for the first time in Japan, to the Shoufū Dormitory at Aobadai Station. At Narita I gather all my bags from a conveyor belt of the travelling industry. The biggest one among them has been slashed open with a knife, perhaps somebody wanted to look at the contents but could not open the zipper as I had put on it a small lock. I complain to the staffs, and for that have to have not only the bag in question but all five of them, all my worldly belongings in other words, thoroughly checked.

It turns out that I have some medicines with me which I have never once used for a year. There are some pain-killer Paracetamol tablets, Amoxyl antibiotics and Carbon tablets for countering stomach disorders. Half of the medicines are taken away, presumably at random. They also

find one or two magazines which have pictures of some Englishwomen with no clothes on. These too have to be taken away, since the nudity they contain is too absolute. Several officers come and flock around them at the desk next to mine. Everyone is now busy discussing the magazine figures which five minutes ago were mine, and with that I am allowed to pack my bags and leave. I later receive a handsome compensation from Japan Air Line for my damaged bag, ¥5,000 if I can remember, which is already five times what the thing had costed me in Manchester. But suitcases are usually even more ludicrously priced in Japan all my friends say that the high price I told them what it would have costed to buy another bag like that is too cheap. But to me a five hundred per cent profit is not such a bad idea. Moreover I am going to be home, yes, finally home again for a few years to come yet.

Last week because of some personal pressure I had to run away from the restaurant where I used to work and live. I have spent the nights working at my desk and in the computer room at the university. During the day I sometimes lay on a bench under the trees, when with my arms crossed I always had a wonderful sleep.

Graham had wanted me to do more study on Voronoi Tessellation, and I know David would not have minded. Together they have supervised Nick and Riaz who are a few year my seniors and whose works are related to what I do. Graham would probably fund my study, and it would have been from his personal resource. 'Look at what you are leaving behind, Kit!', he said in our last meeting where together with David we discuss Viscous Fingering and other possible researches along a similar line. But Japan is something new and I can not wait to see the country.

From Narita Airport going into Tokyo is easy. I buy a ticket for the express train according to the instruction in the booklet which I value dearly now. The train brings me to the Tokyo City Air Terminal. Here I walk a few hundred kilometres, stand on a conveying belt and up an escalator to be met with some ticket vending machines. Here someone helps me buy my ticket for another line.

The trouble so far is that everything around me is written in Japanese and nothing in English. Walking I reach the platform I need when a train pulls up behind me, stops and opens its doors. Written instructions are everywhere, but none of them is of any use to me. I know it is either this train or the one going from the platform on my right that would take me to my station. I ask one of the last passengers who pass me by, 'Aobadai?' He thinks for half a second and then answers with, 'Yes'.

Sitting at last on the right train gives me no such great comfort. It may seem strange, but in Japan everyone and no one can look at you at the same time. 'Now , I shall never be able to get off at the right station',

I silently scream to myself. I am by now dead-tired from hauling, or as my US friends would have said toting all my personal effects along. But I dare allowing myself to catch no naps. I start to count the stations one after another as we pass them. It is my luck, as I will later learn, that this train is a local not an express one, which causes the count to agree with what the instruction in the book says. At the eleventh count I jump down on to the platform. 'Only one more taxi to go', I think to myself wearily.

The NHK Symphony Orchestra gives free subscription concert tickets to foreign students. Whenever there is one there would be an announcement at the university and you can ask at the International Office for a ticket, though sometimes you need to be quick because these are limited in number. I watch such concerts on 14^{th} December 1995 and 13^{th} June 1997 , always at 7 pm. The NHK Hall is within a walking distance from the Shibuya Station.

The Japanese language used to have 145 different syllables, but now it has 142. Among these there are 13 leading consonants, namely *k, s, t, n, h, m, y, r, g, z, d, b* and *p*, and only one final consonant, that is *n*. There are five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*, and six digraphs, namely the *ky, sh, ch, hy, my* and *ry*. The Japanese government had adopted a new system of spelling, but it did not catch on after the War†. The proposed system merely replaces shi with *si*, and similarly chi becomes *ti*, tsu *tu*, fu *hu*, ji *zi*, sha *sya*, shu *syu*, sho *syo*, cha *tya*, chu *tyu*, cho *tyo*, ja *zya*, ju *zyu*, and jo *zyo*. From these possible variations I have the idea that my name, for instance, may be written in the present convention as *Kitchisaku*, *Kitto* or *Kippu*, and my surname *Chapan* or *Chaban*. *Kippu* is written the same as *kifū* but it means *liberality*. It is only used in the phrase 'Edokko kippu ga ī', which means *Edokkites are liberal and generous*. *Chaban* means the *tea tray*. There as no ambiguity whatever with respect to the word *cha* since there is only one character pronounced that way, that is that which means *tea*. These are all written using the old, more popular transliterations, but it comes from the insight obtainable from the proposed system and Pali. Myself I do not much like the new system which renders the Fuji San as Mt Huzi and the Shinto the Sinto Shrine. Perhaps the worst drawbacks regarding the new system is that it is military-like and lacks artistic appeals. Why, for instance, I see no reasons why we should like a robot write *ta, ti, tu, te* and *to* while the *ta, chi, tsu, te* and *to* has no ambiguity whatsoever and is infinitely easier to understand and pronounce. When I design my own

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† *cf* Meiji Matsuzaki. *Angling in Japan.* translated by R. Okada. Board of Tourist Industry. 1940.

system for writing the Thai language with the roman alphabets I keep an eye on simplicity. For example the long vowels are written the same as their corresponding short vowels, but with a dot underneath them. But when *au, oe, ia, ua* and *oa* are followed by a final consonant the dot may be omitted, since their shorter counterpart may have no final consonants. For the same reason *rau* can easily replace the otherwise *rau*. Then, because the under-dot looks simpler than the acute accent, two of the syllabic letters are written as *rue* and *rue* whereas the other two become *lue* and *lue*. These latter two are never used nowadays, so the more friendly *l* is reserved for the more useful *l-Cula*. A dot put above a letter silences it, but when there is already another symbol there it moves down and becomes an *x*. Thus the Thai transliteration of *John* is *Cauhn* whereas the word for *sacred* is *śakdxisiddhi* and pronounced as *sak – sit*, or as *sak – sid* if you would still rather not replace the *mae kod* by the simpler, possible equivalent *mae kot*, again a simplification. When there are no ambiguities, simplify!

The *tsuribori* are fishing ponds where you pay to fish for a certain amount of time. Various fish may be raised in these ponds, for example the *funa* (crucian carp). The surface of water in the natural setting here can be divided into four parts, namely the lower reaches of the river, the middle reaches, the mountain streams and lakes, and the deep sea. In the lower reaches of the river there are both the freshwater fish and those that come up from the sea. Among the former are the *funa* (crucian carp), *higai* (Sarcocheilichthys variegatus), *koi* (carp), *moroko* (Gnathopogon elongatus), *namazu* (catfish), *oikawa* (Zacco platypus), *tanago* (Acheilognathus tabira) the very tiny, *tenaga ebi* (long-armed prawn), *ugui* (Leuciscus hakonensis; aka *haya*, *maruta*) and *unagi* (eel), while the latter comprises the *ina* (the young of the grey mullet), *sayori* (Hyporhampus sajori) which is a kind of half-beak, and *suzuki* (Lateolabrax japonicus) which is like a sea-bass. Both the *bora* (grey mullet) and *oboko* (its fry) are caught. The *fukko*, *koppa* and *seigo* are all the young of the *suzuki* in the various stages of development.

Our Japanese class takes us to Fukuoka where we stay in a five-star hotel and tour the Fukuoka Dome. We also go to a planetarium and to watch the kabuki. The Kabuki *za* (theatre) is at Ginza in the Chūou Ward of Tokyo. It was opened in 1889 when the place was called the Kobiki *chou* (town). Invaluable to the history of Japan are the Kojiki (a record, 712) and the Nihon Shoki (a chronicle, 720). The tradition theatre of Japan can be divided into at least five periods†, namely An-

† *cf* Yoshinobu Inoura and Toshio Kawatake. *The Traditional Theatre of Japan.* The Japan Foundation. 1981.

cient I (600 – 800), Ancient II (800 – 1200), Medieval I (1200 – 1250), Medieval II (1250 – 1350), Medieval III (1350 – 1450) and Medieval IV (1450 – 1600). During the first period one finds the *daijoue*, that is the great thanksgiving festival, a court banquet after the enthronement, and the *chinkonsai* which is in effect a service for the repose of the deceased. In the second half of the ancient period there is the *aware*, literally a moving, albeit happy story, *okashi* which is a strange or amusing story, and the *yosei* which is a story about the afterlife. There arose two types of music and dancing, namely the *bugaku* for the court and the *kagura* for the Shinto shrine. During this period began the *jushi*, that is the enchanter, who performs in the Sarugaku from the end of the Heian (781 – 1192) until the Kamakura (1192 – 1333) Era. During the Medieval I period above were performed in particular the Ennen and the Sarugaku *nou* (Noh). Sarugaku, literally *monkey show*, is the performance of the Heian Era that is centred around things like the art of using words and impersonation. It was performed when people came to watch the *sumou* (sumo) and in the Imperial Sanctuary in December. The term was later used to call any short performance of a mimicry. During the Kamakura Period it became the *kabu geki* (song-and-dance performances) which are known as the *kyougen* (Kyogen) and *nou* (Noh). The Ennen mai, literally *longevity dance*, is the priests' dance that is performed after a big Buddhism gathering at the Toudai and the Koufuku *ji* (temple) in Nara as well as at the other five *dai ji* (big temples), all of which make up the seven big temples of Nambu. It began in the mid-Heian and prospered during the Kamakura Era. The second medieval period saw two attacks by the Mongol, that is to say, in 1274 and 1281. Then the government at Kamakura fell in 1333. The Zen Buddhism arrived from China, and four other sects of Buddhism, namely Ikkou, Ji, Joudo and Nichiren were created in Japan. During the Medieval III period above were begun the *katari mono* (narrative or recitation) and the *kouta* (popular songs). There are also the Dengaku and the Shūgen Noh. The latter is performed after the *kiri nou* (Ending Noh) in some of the performance with happy ending, while the former was performed since the Heian Period. Between the Kamakura and the Nambokuchou (1336 – 1392) Period it was performed in a similar manner as the Sarugaku, but later declined until it is now performed only in either a shrine or a temple.

Kagura, also known as *kami asobi*, was once called *kamukura*. It comprises among other things the *okina* (*lit* an elderly man) and *tanemaki* (seed sowing), It uses as the musical instruments the *wa gon* (Japanese harp), *dai wa teki* (big Japanese flute), *shakubyoushi*, and afterwards was added the *hichiriki*, a flageolet-like instrument. *Hayashi* is the musical band accompaniment of various performances, for example the Kabuki,

minzoku geinou (folk arts), *nagauta* (*lit* long song), and Noh. Examples of the instruments used are the *fue* (flute), samisen or shamisen, *taiko* (drum) and *tsuzumi* (hand drum). There are several types of the kagura, for instance the masked kagura, the *mi* (court) kagura, and the *sato* (village) kagura. The Okina can be either a Nougaku or the transcription for the Samisen thereof. The *zae no onoko* is that amusing performance within the otherwise sacred Kagura.

Some say that the *gigaku* was created in Tibet, India. Others think that it was in Wu, China, which was one amongst the Three Kingdoms, and the reason for this is that it is called by another name, *kuregaku*, the character for *kure* and *wu* being the same and meaning *clamorous*. A Korean dancer of Paekche – kudara in Japanese – whose name in Japanese is Mimashi brought it to Japan in 612. The performers are divided into four groups, namely the *gojin* who are the people of Wu, *irui* the beasts and the birds, *kojin* the barbarians, and *nankaijin* the native of the southern sea.

My present accommodation is 21 – 13, Matsukaze – Dai, Aoba – ku, Yokohama 227. It is a university dormitory the name of which is Shoufū, the word *shou* (pine tree) being written the same as the *matsu* in the address while *fū* (wind) that of the *kaze*.

I swim everyday from until less than a month after I arrive in Japan towards the end of my stay. For the university's *shitsunai pūru* (indoor swimming pool) in the *tai iku kan* (gymnasium) I buy three *nyūjou shou*'s (entrance cards), which last from 11 October 1995 to 10 October 1996, from 14 October 1996 to 13 October 1997, and from 14 October 1997 until 13 October 1998.

On 14 November 1995 Ellen writes. She can hardly contain herself for she has just received a letter from her friend Angelique after not having heard from her for such a long time. She is a lovely French girl whom I met when I visited Ellen at her place in the Whitworth Park. Gabielle from Germany, whom I have never met, is just as sentimental and enthusiastic, but she always tries to hide it whereas Angelique never does.

To Ellen, Ching is a Buddhist woman and her spiritual leader. She used to dress all in white, but then one day makes a complete turnaround to behave like a movie star, and that disillusions Ellen. I have told her a year ago that I never believe in a living person, even though I might do some of his teaching. I believe in God and the Jesus who died on the cross, and is now inside all of us who believe what he says, so that we may know how to reach the former directly through him who is now the main part of the Me within each of us. We should sacrifice ourselves for the sake of no leaders, for the whole is nothing if not us,

and if we would not even look after this sphere of the universe which is closer to us than to .all the other souls that live then we could not possibly better the world. We are each of us a Voronoi cell within the tessellation created by God, each of us just touching all the neighbouring cells without invading it. All such cells are but a part of the whole. The very idea of a spiritual leader is thus a paradox. A soul may teach but never commands.

The following is an adaptation of what I wrote the evening after a day spent in Gorton with Clara, on one summer day of 1995.

In Gorton

Here we sit and talk together,
that is you, Asim, and I.
Or rather it is you
who do the talking,
and we listen all the while.
You are all sincere and kind.

What do we talk about?
You tell us about your life,
Tom, Jim, Alison.
I know them so well now, or nearly,
as if I have met them.

What a nice summer we have!
What nice breezes these are!
And quite a few people here, too,
at the Reservoir. Wonderful!

People on their way passed us by.
Some with their dogs,
others fishing sit,
or on the water are.
And those kids on the pier,
some of them do the somersaults.
So the din is no threats for us,
only their own excitement.

I try to relate these things to you
so that you can see them.

How is your hip now? Clare,
you say you do not feel old.
I understand what you mean, and
want to feel that way too.

I write some haiku's, in English, as my Japanese is not fluent enough. As a part of the Whole we may die and yet never perish. Meanwhile we may love, laugh and cry.

The moon, unmoved,
Shines over catastrophes,
lost love, vanity.

You never say too much when you mean what you say, for you never mean to say too much. So in fact when we think someone is talking more than he should what we mean is that he does not yet know how to do it properly, for never is it possible that we may manage that many things to do when life itself is all readily too short.

Hush! Pianissimo!
You have caused too much noise,
Forsaken dreamer.

I shall not judge, I blame not my past love. Everything has its course, everyone has his own way, and so has she.

'All's in vain', she said!
Oh! How just, how kind, how nice.
With these words I die.

Recently I email to Asim often. On 8^{th} November 1995 he says he has received my email yesterday and has told 'Claire' about it over the telephone. She was very happy and sending her love to me. John is on holidays. When he will come back Asim will try visit her again weekly. He write again on 16^{th} November 1995 when he say that whenever he calls her he says 'Hello!' to her from me. She has given him a message for me, saying, 'Good wishes and many more progresses in life!' On 19^{th} November 1995 , 'I will go to see Clare this Tuesday. Kit you have written a poem for her. I can deliver it to her if you want to because I visits her every Tuesday till I am in Manchester'. He probably means that he is still in Manchester now. Things happen much faster now because of the Internet. Some people even no longer bother about pressing the *shift* key. By 'a poem' he probably means the one I had hid, after having written it, in my home directory at the Control System Centre. I never ask him what he was doing there, but since it has become known I might as well put it here. As it was meant essentially to be a soliloquy, you could do well to ignore my English. I wrote it as fast as possible from the impression.

We are in Gorton, Clare

We sat there talking together

you, Asim, and me
or, to put it correctly,
you did the talking,
we listened

you are kind, sincere, virtue
what did we talk about ?
you talked about your past
Tom, Jim, Allison
I nearly know them
as if I have met them

What a nice summer
what a nice breeze
quite a few people were there
at the reservoir in Gorton

people passed us, some with dogs
others sat fishing
or are on the water
kids on the pier did some somersault

I tried to relate these to you
as you could not see well

how is your hip, Clare ?
you said you did not feel old,
I think that I understand your meaning
in future I will feel the same

On 23^{rd} November 1995 I know that she had an argument with Stephen, and for that reason he stopped going her house making an excuse that he is busy in his study. Asim will attend the Christmas party where he will look after Clare. He tells me he is cooking chicken with rice and vegetable nearly everyday. I should guessed as much.

On 25^{th} November 1995 I go with my class to a historic town where there are many old temples (Buddhist), shrines (Shinto), and a palace of the 12^{th} century. Kamakura is a very nice town. Here you can find big image of the Buddha sitting outdoor without any cover. Here also there are many interesting legends and stories some of which are historical while the others are religious. For example, one very big tree was the very tree behind which an assassin hid himself before he attacked the last Shogun. Japan used to be divided in to the eastern and the western parts. The capital, before the 11^{th} century, used to be not Tokyo but Kyoto which is on the western side. After the east had won the last war of the clans, the then government moved their office to Kamakura while still maintaining Kyoto as the capital as usual. It was only since after

the last Shogun was killed that Tokyo has become a new capital in place of Kyoto, and that the Shogun era had ended. The following era was to be that of the emperors. There is a trip with the Japanese class, 26^{th} November 1995 , and on 27^{th} November 1995 there is a party at 5:30 pm in Toukoudai (TIT).

Asim seems to like the poem that I wrote. He says it is brilliant. He says he like my idea of writing a poem using easy words such that everybody may be able to understand it easily. Secondly it covers the things which happened during the time of our visit which reminds him the picture of our meeting with Clare.

On 5^{th} December 1995 there is a party between 8 and 10 pm at the Westin Hotel in Tokyo, which is inside the Ebisu Garden Place next to the Ebisu Station on the Yamanote Line. Today is the birthday of the King of Thailand, that is Rama IX or Bhụmibol. The party is organised by the Thai ambassador. This place is in the middle of Tokyo, and is not far from my University. There are many Thai people there. Japan, especially Tokyo, is all crowded with Thais. I have met many of my friends here. At the party a telephone company offers free long distance calls, so I make one home. I talk with Nhăung over the phone. She tells me that she will have an email address soon. I shall sleep at my laboratory tonight. I have found out a solution for avoiding the crowded rush-hour in Tokyo, that is to do your things at a different time from other people. I think it would work.

This month there is going to be a big celebration in Tokyo on the day that World War II ended. Seven overseas students from TIT are invited and I am among them. Our teachers have many interesting programs for us. I feel privileged. I am about to finish reading the *Les Misérables* (1862) by Hugo (1802 – 1885). I have not read any Jane Austen (1775 – 1817) yet, so I can not say whether I like them. The Chinese classes that I attend are unofficial and are taught by Chinese students at the university. I have met many Chinese students here. They are in general very nice people.

Japanese is a difficult language. So far I have done nothing much apart from going to the Japanese classes, but my Japanese is still no good. The weather is very nice when Autumn is still here. This winter we could have some snow. From Asim, dated 7^{th} December 1995 , 'Assalam-o-alaikum I believe your lab seems to be better than a house. It has been snowing here since two days'.

Today, 8^{th} December 1995 , we have a Japanese test, that is the 1^{st} book of the *nihongo no kiso* (fundamental of the Japanese language). After that we go to the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Museum near the Meguro Station to look at the exposition of sculptures by Edouard M.

Sandoz. On 10^{th} December 1995 there is a party by the Meguro International Association from 6 until 8:30 pm. We need to be here earlier at 5 pm if we want to help. It is held on the 6^{th} floor of the Community Hall of the Tokyu Cultural Center in front of Fujigaoka Station on the Den-en Toshi Line, a potluck party where everyone brings a dish.

This is 14^{th} December. If the life in Manchester was a little too rough for me, my life in Tokyo is a little too smooth. It was all right when I had to endure hardships, but now that there are no more of these I begin to feel somewhat guilty and can not help but think that I should be looking after my parents who are in Thailand now. The New Year will be here soon, and Christmas! Japanese people do celebrate the latter fairly rigorously, but I have a feeling that the Thai people do so even more so.

I have just finished reading the *Les Misérables*. I shall read next the works by Milton, which are harder to understand because they are poems whereas the other one is a translated novel. In my point of view the *Les Miserables* should be considered a historical book that is dressed up as a novel because Hugo gave a lot of the French history of the 19^{th} century. I have met no Thai-governmental scholarship students here, but those whom I have met while in Manchester were far from being careful in their spending. This was probably because they also work part-time jobs at restaurants while at the same time receiving the scholarship money. Most of the overseas students here are sponsored by the Monbusho, that is to say, the Ministry of Education of Japan.

I like the music in the Swan Lake very much. I think that I might have seen it in Budapest, but I am no longer certain. I went to a concert yesterday (14^{th} Dec.). It was a subscription concert by NHK Symphony Orchestra. I am not so sure about the name. I do not know what a subscription concert really mean. In this case it is a concert which allows students to attend free of charge. I think it can mean either a subscribing or a subscribed concert. They played two songs, which were Symphony No.4 (op. 60 in B flat, 1806) and Symphony No.7 (op. 92 in A, 1812) by Beethoven (1770 – 1827). I like the Symphony No.7 very much. When it was written Beethoven must have been nearly completely deaf. Tragically he wrote it while regretting at his lost hearing. The NHK Symphony Orchestra is excellent. Japan has a good facility for music. I find it better to stay at the university during the night than to be at the dormitory.

This is 15^{th} December 1995 and soon it will be Christmas.

X'mas, I have got nothing to do
except to stay here
where by no mean's much so

rigid that the mere
thought of it chills me.

Internet is very important, and is only becoming more so as a mass media. I think that you may rightly doubt it for being a business playground, or as the best way to store information, but as for being a mass media it is second to none.

X'mas is here,
New Year near.
Be my Christmas not white,
I thought that perhaps there might
be some snow in Manchester, so that you may yet see
a white X'mas there for me.

Though this be not a fine poem,
written by a man without a home,
I do hope
that you will be able to cope
with problems both big and small.
Have both the happiness and success withal!

The commemoration for the end of World War II is held on 18^{th} December 1995 . From the Intensive Class of Japanese we travel together to Monbusho, have lunch on the bus, then go to the National Theatre. The security measure is very strict. We stand in a queue in order to get to our seat. At 2 pm the emperor arrives. There are many people of high position here today, for example the prime minister, ministers, and senates. This is the anniversary which marks the 50^{th} year since the end of the war. This is a big anniversary while the place, that is the Large Theatre (it's actual name) of the National Theatre, is small by comparison. But it is a big event for us because the invitation to attend this event came from the prime minister in the first place. On top of this, both the emperor and empress of Japan are here. This is not to mention all the others who always come along with people of such a high calibre as this.

Most of them talk about the hostility of the war. It seems that they concentrated mainly on the suffering of Japan and the Japanese people, except for one female senate who clearly talks about the hostility that the Japanese troop had done throughout the war. We are being broadcasted on the television. I would not be surprised at all if it is now live on international channels, for instance the BBC and the CNN. In the evening there is a party organised by the prime minister.

Those that attend this event include the 82 students from abroad, which naturally includes me. The food at the party is very nice. After

a long search, I manage to find the first British person since my arrival in Japan at this party. I met the first Thailand's KB student in Japan, who is a very nice person. There are not that many KB students here, only a few persons each year. The total number could be about 40.

Japanese children seem to be unaware about the mistakes made by their ancestors. You find this kind of distorted history not only here in Japan but everywhere. May be it is human nature to say only what we want to, and leave out, or even lie about the rest. There are 82 foreign students present, according to the announcement anyway. Julie is that first British person that I met here in Japan as mentioned earlier. She is a PhD student in International Relation. She is married and her husband is studying Italian in the UK. She came from the University of Sheffield.

Then again, things get better once to have learnt the language of the country in which you live. The way people thinks is always reflected in the very nature of their language.

Proposition 1.1. *Every language is the people in the sense that a person is a function of the language he speaks.*

If you accept this proposition, and only if you do so, then we have the following dilemma [sic].

Dilemma 1.1.1. *Japanese is Japanese people. Then (subalternation) if we have Luk, for example, learning the Japanese language, then he is at the same time learning about the Japanese people.*

It follows that after a while you gain insight to how the people of the country think, and thus know how to behave yourself with regard to them. If the contact, for instance, is between TDK [TKD?] and UMIST, they will probably respect both UMIST and you too.

The Christmas Party on 21^{st} December 1995 is at 6:30 pm, and the Year End party in the Centennial Memorial Hall from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. The party is for foreign students. The following day I help cleaning the lab in preparation for the coming New Year. The Christmas Holiday lasts two weeks starting from tomorrow. There is another party scheduled for the holiday. I live for parties, because by bread alone we do not live you see. If you ask me about other things I guess that I will probably not know, but ask me about parties and that is another matter.

Parties are not everything (how often do I need to reminding myself about this). My supervisor asks me to write an application form for entering the PhD program. I got the form from the registrar yesterday but still can not read it, so I just put it on my desk for the time being. I plan to spend this coming holidays gathering up my courage and shall

later attempt to fill in the form, perhaps next year. I am going to be 30 years old next year. How happy! I am no longer a kid.

Some of my Thai friends are leaving here to head for home for Christmas. There will probably be entrance exams for entering the PhD. How I hate exams! I do not think that I will make it. No one here seems to have perceived my ignorance yet, but they will.

In Japan it is, on 23^{rd} December 1995 , not very cold yet since we are lower in latitude compared to the UK. But I think that next month it will be much colder. January is supposed to be the coldest month here. Tokyo is very nice, and we can even see Mouth Fuji from here. You can call it Fuji *san* but never Fuji *yama* even though both use the same character.

I had done nothing during the holiday. Actually the Christmas Holiday ends today, 3^{rd} January 1996 , and tomorrow everyone will come to the university as usual. Later on today, *ante meridiem*, I have a party at one of my Japanese teachers' place, together with the rest of the class. That means five of us altogether, the class is that small.

Nhan lives in New York now and I think it is still snowing there. It must be nice to have snow in a big city like that. Tokyo must be comparatively very hot, for example yesterday I really felt that it was like the spring, except that there were no flowers yet. Tokyo is on the east coast of Japan where it is relatively mild compared to the west coast. I have been staying at the lab. every night for quite a while now. Many students do the same thing. This is one of the things that are different from what people do UMIST.

The party is at the house of Takeda *sensei* (teacher), which is on the other side of Tokyo if you look on the train's map. But the map does not tell much about the true location. It is only a kind of diagram to fit in the information about all the stations, more topological rather than geographical ones. I meet the rest of my class at the station in front of the Toukoudai at 11 am. Sensei make for us the Suki, fried rice, ice-cream, and others. Her birthday was some time recent, I think, because we also say 'Happy Birthday!' to her. She has many cassettes of the Thai music. Someone in her family has something to do with the country. I miss England badly. Foreigners here are no substitutes for the British people that I know.

Asim writes on 4^{th} January 1996 . Tomorrow will be his last day at UMIST. Its now 45 minutes past midnight and he will start printing his dissertation at 2 am. I am going to submit his work on Friday and then spend a week at his Aunt's house. Then he will go back to Pakistan on Friday 12 January. He says that Clare had been ill in early December, but she has recovered now. She went on a holiday trip with Alison and

Steve. She gave me the message 'Merry Christmas & Happy New Year' through him. 'I am grateful for your help during the course and will remember you as a genius friend', he concludes. Well, he disappears from the scene at around the time when he go back to his country, and neither Ken nor I have a clue what he is up to. There is not much that we can do, but he is in God's hands as I believe he must have always been, so there is nothing to worry about.

I feel more or less at home here in Japan now, that is to say, on 5^{th} January 1996 . There is still the language problem of course, and I do not think that my Japanese is going anywhere. But I no longer worry about that now. Now I tend to stay at the laboratory every night. Tonight, for example, I do not have any sleep, and the following day sees me back at the pool swimming again for the first time after the Christmas holiday. The pool reopens on 6^{th} January. I could have got myself drowned for the lack of sleep, but (un)fortunately that does not happen. I sleep a little in the evening.

I have given up trying to learn Japanese. I feel fed up with the language. I will just let it develop by its own accord, putting no particular efforts on my part. We shall see if this does not work. I doubt if it would.

There is a party from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm at Fujigaoka on 7^{th} January 1996 , then on 8^{th} January 1996 an interview at counselling centre. I have a minor misunderstanding with Katsuhisa who is my supervisor.

My Japanese class has restarted today, 11^{th} January 1996 , after a long Christmas holiday, and also has my laboratory. I am looking for some place closer to the university to stay. The Shofu Dormitory where I am now is very far from the university. Apart from that, it is half an hour of walking from the dormitory to the Aobadai Station. Having said that, the walk could be nice provided that you have the time to appreciate it. And here is the countryside, so you are closer to the nature than the area around the university. But I am a workaholic who still love the computer and the Internet so much that I always stay at the laboratory instead of coming back in the windy and freezing night and risk missing the last train, and so on. It is very cold waiting for the train to arrive at the station. Moreover, back at the dormitory there is no central heating, which makes it very cold and empty in my room. I could have bought a heater, but that would not have been as good as a central heating system. How I miss the convenience of the European dormitory in this respect. No Thai students here would buy his heater. They always wait for somebody to leave and then inherit one.

But I really would like to have some snow in the city in Tokyo. There could be some in February, or so I am told. There is a party at TIT

on 12^{th} January 1996 at 11 am. I know this because I read the notice at the dormitory. On 18^{th} January 1996 there is again a subscription concert at the NHK.

John, my teacher in the UK, says on 20^{th} January 1996 that I am already on the pass list. I guess that it means that I have graduated. It is good when I think that one copy of my dissertation will be kept in the Joule Library at UMIST, and hopefully it will remain there as long as the university does for other people to use in order to better our understanding of the mechanism of percolation and unveil the remaining secrets of the Voronoi tessellation. I know that percolation must have something to do with God. And as for tessellations, they are geometry and therefore His language if not countenance.

It snows today. Tokyo looks lovely under the snow. It has all melted away by now, but earlier in the day I went for a long train ride just in order to look at the country side covered with snow. Going by train is very cheap here if you never get off at a train station. You may take a very long ride and go to some very far places and then come back to the station where you started from. The ticket is only checked at the exit of a station. There are in theory ticket controllers who examine your ticket on long-distance trains, but I hardly ever meet one. Anyhow I have some excuse from my being a foreigner. For this, my Japanese is my witness.

I always thought that something strange occurred to me last year, that is when I decided to do a master degree. If anyone had asked me two years earlier whether I would do that, I would have laughed until I choke. I am now applying for a place to do a PhD here. In the light of what I have just said, what can be more far-fetched than this. Students who study here are in general previously top from their classes elsewhere. From this I cannot help but feel myself comparatively stupid. But one should never envy at anyone. *Inops, potentem dum vult imitari, perit.* 'You be yourself and be good!', one of my friends might have told me. No one is as impressive to behold as a devout black Christian.

Martin had to write a recommendation email for me again. I have to ask him to do this since I dare not write to ask Graham to do the same thing, since I have not kept the promise that I gave to him and David regarding my carrying on with more works on my own here. I underestimated the complexity of languages. Computers are never the same when they support different languages. Even when these languages are similar to each other, for instance the English and the French languages, they can still cause some considerably serious bouts of headache. With a totally different set of characters like Chinese, Japanese and Thai, you may well forget about the whole thing. Not even local experts know a good solution. I have nearly finished reading Milton but have yet to

start on Austen.

Now that I have done it, that is to say, completing my MSc, I may die in peace. My memory is no good. I often have to come back to check whether I have locked the door of my room. This is particular annoying when you are already a couple of blocks away from the dormitory. My father seems to want to have me back in Thailand soon to get myself married, my project is going nowhere, and I am told that I shall be doing a presentation in Japanese for my entrance exam to do a PhD. I have already lost my faith in love, so I probably would not know how to find myself a wife now. Moreover, when it comes to looking for a spouse, in Thailand a Buddhist distrusts a Christian, a Christian uneasy in the presence of a devout Buddhist, a Muslim always misunderstood, Indians and the snakes are indistinguishable the one from the other as well as among themselves, and a Non-religion looks askance at all, comprehending no one. Having said all this, I neither am a pessimist nor do I judge.

Buddhism tells us never to have any *diṭṭhi* (opinion). Normal conventions try to say that this word here only means those wrong opinions. But *right* and *wrong* are poorly defined, especially so when it has to do with such a fleeting thing as the opinion. I maintain that Buddha means exactly what he says, that is one should always have no opinions regarding others, since all opinions necessarily imply our interaction with other people. In other words, one may not judge. This is not only similar to but exactly the same as what Jesus Christ says, that one shall not judge. In the light of these, all our differences among the various religions, as well as among the different sects within each of them, necessarily become nonsense.

Various tools and agencies exist and commercialised nowadays that could bring to people together and marry. I wonder where one can find a room for love in such a setting as these. You pay for the service of getting, say, the wife for you. Do not blame me if all this sounds bland, for that is what they are. But even these also follow from the will of God, so one should never judge. By 31^{st} January 1996 I have already applied for a PhD and I am now waiting for the English and the Japanese exams, and a presentation of my past projects which also has to be done in Japanese. They must be a hatter! After only four months of learning the language, no matter how intensive the course may be.

The intensive Japanese class which I am attending has, at the moment, a visiting emeritus professor in Chemical Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is also an expert in technical Japanese, especially for technical terms in Chemistry, and has written a book of such a monstrous size. He will be teaching us to read and write technical

Japanese literatures. Our teachers are very responsible and work very hard towards our progress.

As a research student I can not buy the *teiki ken* (term ticket) for the train. It is much cheaper to have one of these, but you need to be a student. So Kàng, a Thai student whom I know buy one for me under his name since he does not need to commute. The pass costs ¥11,520 and lasts from 4th January until 3rd April 1996. My card commutes me between two campuses of TIT, that is Ōokayama and Nagatsuta the stations of which are respectively Ōokayama and Suzukakedai. The train from Ōokayama to Futako Tamagawaen is Toukyū Touyoko *sen* (line), and here we must change to another platform to go on the Toukyū Denentouchi line to Aobadai station which is four stations before Suzukakedai. When I become a PhD student in April, I buy my first term ticket for a month which lasts from 4th April to 3rd May, and it costs me ¥4,040.

But I move into a new place closer to the university on Friday 1st March 1996 . I moved my belongings there one week before this, during the weekends when it was snowing heavily, which is very unusual in Tokyo. That means the 24th and 25th of February, this year being a leap-year. I first moved my things to the laboratory and store them there in my locker or on my desk. My desk was thereby cluttered with things until I move them into my room at the new place on that white weekends. I borrow a trolley from our third floor at the South 5 Building. Still it was very difficult to push the trolley through the thick snow lying on the ground. It takes twenty minutes to walk from the place to the lab with no luggage, it must have taken me an hour to do so with them. My new address is Room 207 Aotsuka Height, 2 – 21 – 11 Haramachi, Meguro Ku, Toukyou 152.

In Keiou 4 (1868) the government of Edo installed itself in Toukyou and moved the capital of the country here from Kyouto. The city was divided into 15 *ku* (wards) in Meiji 1 (1868), and became Toukyou *chi* (city) in Meiji 21. In Shouwa 7 (1932) the surrounding towns and villages were added to make 35 ku, and in Shouwa 22 Toukyou Metropolis had 23 *tokubetsu ku* (special wards), 14 *chi* (cities), 3 *gun* (districts) and 3 *shichou* (municipal cities).

The present system of naming the era in Japan began in the reign of the emperor Koutoku (596 – 654) whose name is Ameyorozutoyohi or Karu. He reigned from 645 until his death, and carried out the Taika Reform. For the first time in Japanese history a name of an era was officially adopted, that is the Taika Era which lasted five years (19 Jun. 645 – 15 Feb. 650 according to the dictionary published in 1969 by Iwanami Shouten, or 19 June 645 – 8 Feb. 650 to the 1971 dictionary published in 1971 by Koudan Sha). With the governor of the Joumon (Choumon)

province presenting Koutoku with a *hakuchi* (white pheasant) the era changes into the Hakuchi Era (15 Feb. 650 – Jan. 655 according to Iwanami, or 9 Feb. – 10 Oct. 655 to Koudan). The present era is the Shouwa Era which began on 25 December 1926. Before this it was the Taishou Era lasting from 30 July 1912 until 24 December 1926, and before that the Meiji Era from 8 September 1868 to 29 July 1912. Before the emperor Meiji was Koumei (1831 – 1866) who came to the throne in 1846 but was officially crowned in 1847. His reign is divided into six eras, namely Kaei (28 Feb. 1848 – 26 Nov. 1854), Ansei (27 Nov. 1854 – 17 Mar. 1860), Manen (18 Mar. 1860 – 18 Feb. 1861), Bunkyū (19 Feb. 1861 – 19 Feb. 1864), Genji (20 Feb. 1864 – 7 Apr. 1865) and Keiou (8 Apr. 1865 – 7 Sep. 1868). Japanese historians trace their dates far back into the past. One only hopes that these are accurate. We have, for instance, the Ninna Era (21 Feb. 885 – 26 Apr. 889) under the emperor Koukou (830 – 887). His name is Tokiyasu and he reigned for three years, that is during 884 – 887. In the past, the eras only roughly coincide with the changing of emperors. For example, Koukou died in 887 but the Ninna Era lasts until 889. Therefore the first part of the reign of the following emperor, Uda (his name Sadami, lives 867 – 931, reigns 887 – 897) is in the Ninna Era while the other part in the Kampyou Era (27 Apr. 889 – 25 Apr. 898). Uda abdicated for the sake of his son, Daigo (Atsugimi, 885 – 930), who reigns for 33 years from 897. Like his father, Daigo also reigns in the Kampyou Era before it changes into the Shoutai Era (26 Apr. 898 – 14 Jul. 901).

I work at the Golden Leaf restaurant at Jiyugaoka. I can neither serve nor cook because neither my cooking nor my Japanese is good enough. So I wash the dishes. Washing dishes in a restaurant is by no means a taxing job. There is a huge washing machine. All you have to do is to put the plates on the racks, put these inside the machine and close its door. Since the machine uses hot water for the washing, there is no need to wipe the cleaned dishes. From 4^{th} to 19^{th} February 1966 I work almost evening, on average 5 – 6 hours a day.

By 7^{th} February 1996 I already know that I will go on to do PhD here. The government here will extend the support they have given me for another three years. There are various reasons why I decided to move out from the university dormitory now instead of waiting for the term to expire. For one thing, the new place is cheaper, because I pay only a little bit more than 2 *man* (ten thousands), and I think that I will get ¥12,000 help from Monbusho. I do not know about the electric, water, and gas charges, but the cost is likely to be even lower considering that there are no needs now to buy the train tickets. Obviously less travelling time is required to come to the university. It is reduced to less

than half of what it previously was. And there are some very interesting international organisation in the Meguro Ward, some of which I might want to come along. Apart from doing my project, I need to run around and do things. This has been my trait since time immemorial. You might call this an attitude problem, but that is my problem. If I waited for my term at the dormitory to end, there could be many people looking for a new accommodation then, so I might have to settle for something more expensive than what I pay now, or somewhere further away from the university than here. I have always been staying at the lab all night instead of going back to the dorm. And Shofu is a men dormitory, which makes it rather strange especially if you have enjoyed living in a mixed dormitory.

On 23^{rd} February 1996 I have my exams and presentation in Japanese. No one will understand what I say I am sure. But, anyway, I am still waiting for the result of my application to do the PhD. Now that I have moved from Yokohama into Tokyo, it takes about 15 minutes to walk to the university. I guess living in a private flat will be more expensive than living in a dormitory. The problem with having to take a train home was that you could miss the last train. The train stops after half past midnight. There was snow about four days ago. It has stopped now, but there is still some snow left on the ground here and there. My Japanese class is about to come to an end. I have been lazy lately. I have too many things to do. There is not enought time. I have been trying to finish reading the Bible, but it seems ever to be far-fetched.

There is a closing ceremony for the Intensive Japanese course on 6^{th} March. I have been given the biggest certificate I ever have in my life, though I do not think that I shall have any use for it in the future. I know from Katsuhisa on the 8^{th} that I have passed the entrance requirements to do the PhD. I will be presenting a paper at a conference in St Louis during 24 – 28 June, perhaps on the 27^{th}. For this there is no financial helps coming from the lab. The Ministry of Education gives our lab more than enough money to look after me, but that is another matter.

During 13 – 15 March 1996 I travel with the International Students Office at TITech to Kyūshū. We are altogether about fifty. The trip is partly sponsored by the office. I try on many new things, including a hot bath in Japanese style. The first night we stay at a five star hotel by the seaside at Fukuoka city. Close by was a Near by is a big stadium. It is inside a dome that can be opened at the top so that it could either be an indoor and an outdoor stadium. The scale of the place is simply amazing. Here there have been concerts by Michael Jackson, Madonna, Simon and Garfunkel, and others. This is the first time that I go anywhere this far from Tokyo.

Graham is at a conference in Australia until next month. I want to get some more works done before my presentation in the US, but it is difficult to carry on a project on my own. The registration for the PhD is going to be sometime during the week following the 24th March. Before the registration there is the graduation ceremony and after that a party for those members of the lab who have recently graduated. Our laboratory joins with the neighbouring one each year in making the party. The lab will be turned into a drinking bar on that day, while the other lab looks after the food. I have been wondering until now why there are various kinds of alcoholic drinks in one cupboard in our office, while nobody ever touches them. And there are a few books here on how to make cocktails. Now I know that both of these are the materials and the handbooks for such parties as the one on the coming 26th March. We are going to be not only a drinking house but a cocktail lounge.

I will meet up with my parents and both of my sisters in New York before I go to St Louis to do my presentation. My PhD thesis can be written in English. It seems they usually prefer theses to be written in that language when possible. This is true for all written reports, but on the other hand presentations are always preferably in Japanese. I want to be registered as a student first, before applying for the US visa. The registration is on the 28th of March. There is no letter of acceptance from the conference because it is announced on the Internet. I am not going to be in Manchester for my master-degree graduation ceremony because it coincides with the presentation in the US. On 26th March there is a graduation ceremony at the university. Thai students meet to take pictures. No students in all the world take as many pictures on their graduation as the Thais. There must be some reasons for this.

I become a PhD student in April 1996. My identification number is 96D39105. Months are standardised into twelve in number for a year. This is the same the world over. But the year count depends on your philosophy, national identity, or religion. In the West the year we use is Anno Domini, in the year of the Lord, in Thailand Buddhist Era, and in Japan the name of the Emperor. Therefore I was born in AD 1966, BE 2509 and Shouwa 41 at the same time, and it is now AD 1996, BE 2539 and Heisei 8.

The good thing about having religious belief is, according to Ellen, that you can always find some explanation for your doubt, happiness and disappointment to calm your mind. And the last resort for the unexplainable things is that they are God's will. *Experto credite* (Virgil, *Æneid* 11.283 –). She is currently working on an oil company project, that is as of 19th April. She says that I may visit her in Vienna. Cū's dissertation is on heat exchanger and she writes it in Fortran. She says

on 30th April that the weather in Manchester at the moment is nice even though it is rainy. She came 21st in her class of 32. She does some exercises and swimming in the gym. She went to see the *Wind in the willow* on 16 May but thought that the first act was boring.

Ellen thinks that when people can not eat they will make sure that no other people may eat. But if we look after the others, then God will also look after us 'The ladles were that long,' she says, 'and to spoon-feed each other must be very easy and lots of fun'. I think that other people are in actuality a part of us as we a part of them. Both are parts of the same whole, which was what we always have been and which is also what we shall be. When we hurt one another we injure no one apart from ourselves.

I fly to the US on 21 May 1996. I go to the Niagara Falls, Washington DC, New York City, and then St Louis where I attend a conference. The Niagara Falls are in Buffalo. The Youth Hostel here gives me the map of the surrounding and tells me where I could walk around and where I should not go. This is to be one of the highlights of this trip. The others are Nova Scotia where you feel yourself so close to the nature, and Washington DC where everything interesting is all free. It is reasonably warm but windy at the Falls. I like them so much that I could sit here and look at them for hours. The food here is very cheap. I buy a big bag of popcorn and it lasts me several days. In New York I stay with my sister Nhan who lives in the accommodation of the Columbia University. She meets me at the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Airport and then we take the subway to her *apartment*. We are already in front of her place when she crosses to the other side of the street to buy some eggs, and tripped over that somebody had tied across the footpath. The tendon of her right-hand thumb is torn when she falls down, so later we go to the emergency room at the university's hospital for the operation to stitch it. This is one of the cities where people on the street go crazy, so you need to always stay on the look out. Somebody fell asleep in a subway train and woke up attacked by a knife in the face, so you should never close your eyes when you travel underground. You should always keep a reasonable distance from any stranger. Once an elderly lady was pushed down the platform to her death on the track, again of a subway and for no particular reasons. On 1^{st} June 1996 we watch *The King and I* by Rodgers & Hammerstein, at the Neil Simon Theatre, New York, 2 pm. After that we watch the *Cinderella* at the Metropolitan Opera, 8 pm. On 5^{th} June 1996 by myself I go on the Circle Line which cruises around Manhattan, from 11:30 am. My accent now is neutral, that is neither Kiwi nor British, though definitely not American. As a proof of this, I need no documents to pass as a local not a tourist. You pay less on

the cruise if you live here, that is why. I only hand out the money and casually exchange a few words with the lady who sells the tickets. She knows a nomad when she sees one.

I like New York. It is not a safe place, and this is not why I like it. But I have heard that it has become much safer than it used to be five or six years ago. Now the downtown area is safe, by the standard here anyhow, though close to it there are areas which are unsafe. The northern part of Manhattan is wild and not very nice. There you become used to the sound of the sirens. The unsafe areas are namely, the East and the West Harlem's, Bronx, and Queens. The Central Park in the middle of Manhattan is like a forest. One day during my visit here a girl is killed inside the park. The news seems as if it is nothing unusual. The park itself is very interesting. But this is probably what that girl thought and what her murderer knows. New York is built on a layer of solid rock called the Schist. This is the reason why so many skyscrapers can be built here. The rock acts as the best foundation for these buildings. Outcrops of these rocks can be seen inside the Park.

Nhan drives us in a rented car up to Canada. At one point she is crossed at me for being too poor at reading maps and co-piloting. I think it must be the wound from the operation that worries her. With her hand in the plaster cast she is the only one who drives as my father is now an elderly and exempted from the driving, my mother does not drive, it has been years since I was behind the wheel, and I have no licences for driving here. Considering this, she is doing a good job already, so I largely keep my mouth shut. Ben always says, 'People never change'. He must be right. At other times we say, 'People change', and we are absolutely right too. The funny thing about objective sayings is that they are all true no matter how contradictory they are among themselves.

In Canada we go to the Nova Scotia. The name is not French, because then it would have been called *Nouvelle-Écosse*, but Latin. And I think that *Scotia* is a Latinised version of the English word *Scotland*, because the Romans called Scotland not by that name but *Calēdonia*. It had been a part of the French territory Acadia until 1713 when it became an English territory. It has numerous lakes, rivers and forests, and is the fishermen's land. Halifax is its capital. But the Acadia National Park is south of here, an archipelago in the US north from the New York City. We visit this latter on our way back, when I am held with awe by the beauty of the panoramas of the surrounding sea from the top of a mountain.

The land here is mainly covered with forests. Though there are a few cities, in general there are not that many people. But those we meet are kind and helpful, and this includes all the staffs who are also very

good-mannered. Unlike in US, here one feels safe on the street. Many of the smaller towns through which we pass have a population of less than a hundred. All around there is the beauty in the simplicity. I have never been to the Grand Canyon, but I guess that it must be somewhat different there where the beauty is instead in the grandeur. Yet never does nature lack grandeurs. There are many scenic drives and whale-watching boats. On our way back to the US we visit the house in which the Roosevelts used to live.

Back in New York the city looks as unfriendly and disordered as ever. It seems even more so when you come back to it after a trip. The traffic here is not only a headache but also a heartache. My parents return to Thailand the very evening we arrive, and are thus spared the agony of adjustments. I noticed that people in US, especially those in New York, never talk but shout when they speak to each other. Thus this is literally a *shouting city.* There are shoutings on the street and, in fact, everywhere. *Wie soll ich wissen, was ich sage, bevor ich höre, was ich rede.* Stefan said this who is a member of our lab. But of course this proverb means a different thing, and not the shouting in order to hear oneself amidst the city noises here. I tell you it is not only from the noises that we shout but also from the nerves, and that is worse. Wie soll ich sage und höre?

St. Louis is nice place but it is very hot here. The conference is exhausting. In a way this city is similar to Manchester because it used to be a centre of commerce, and of the boats that navigated the Mississippi River, and the railway networks. But now it has become quiet, and there is nothing much for one to do here. The headquarters of the Budweiser beer is here, however, so I visit the plant and later try some free beer. Here I stay at the Youth Hostel which is not in a safe area. I walk along the street from the town centre, trying to find it. A couple stop their car to ask where I want to go. I tell them, 'The Youth Hostel'. Upon hearing this they tell me to hop into the back seat, then drive along less than half a kilometre further down the road before pulling over to the right. Still not realising that this is the place, they lead me through a narrow passage between two houses which opens up on the inside and then, 'Voila!', there it is, the Youth Hostel. I would never have found the place even if I walked past it. More likely than not I would have spent one more hour before I would find the place, were it not for this couple who have risked their lives helping me who had risked my life coming with them. Still, there is no questions whatever that this is a dangerous place. When you come back here on the bus after dark, you need to get off precisely at the right stop. For if you missed it and got off at the next stop, not only would you be walking a long way back but also you would

during that time be in a great anticipation of falling a prey to something or another. But if the worse comes to the worst and you have already missed your chance of getting safely off, then the best thing to do is to go along all the way to the next supermarket where there would be people around, and from there get another bus back. The driver would probably understand and give you a free ride.

My supervisor, Katsuhisa, is also here at this conference presenting a paper of his. He takes me to a restaurant inside the hotel where he stays and where we have the conference, and treats me to a dinner. We have steaks and beers, and have a most enjoyable talk when I tells him many things, for instance where I.had been before coming to the conference. I also tell him about this interesting tour of the Budweiser's headquarters. The next morning I do not see him at the conference.

On the morning of 1^{st} July 1996 I read in the newspaper a haiku the translation of which is the following.

A snake has already gone away,
But its eyes which were staring at me
Still lingers upon the grass.

This is far profounder than the English, 'Once bitten, twice shy'. Here there has been no physical contact, only the look. Should one thank God for having the snake spare us? Should one wonder where it is going to, what it will do, or whether it will come back again? Should one fear the serpent because of that close-encounter, or fear for its safety because it has just spared us? And so on. One needs not understand this poem at all. On the contrary, one likes it precisely because one does not understand what it tries to say. It gives you questions not answers, which is always better.

On 26^{th} August 1996 ,

I think that my ex-girlfriend should
not be the one to be blamed. For
I believe that she really did like me,
but she might like breaking my heart more.

Sadly to say, I shall never be more profound than this. Sigh!! Today I have had an accident with my bike and my leg is still bleeding.

Last Saturday
I biked
about 25 km within Tokyo.
I loved it.
I will do more,
unless I break my leg before.

Nhŭeng is being curious in Thailand, for he writes today, 28^{th} August 1996 , 'Tell me about Japan. Tell me what you like about Tokyo. Tell me about people there. Tell me about your friend. Tell me anythings'. He has an MBA from the US and owns a company.

I have just come back from a birthday party. In fact it was two birthday parties in one. There will be people graduating soon, so we plan to go somewhere, probably seaside. I am going to finish this roll of film I have in my camera. Then I shall put the camera away and give up taking pictures. We shall see whether that will not give me some peace of mind. It is raining. I hope that the weather will be fine this Sunday, and the sky clear as forecasted, so that we may go to the sea. I am going to write some emails first, and then go home on my bicycle. On 30^{th} August 1996 Nok says that this Sunday is also going to be Eng's birthday party. Then on 31^{st} August 1996 I go to a big temple in the middle of Tokyo called the Meiji Shrine. It is in the Shibuya area.

On Sunday 1^{st} September 1996 Cū says that she is writing up her dissertation but has decided against carrying on to the PhD. Together with Ọ she will move to the Orient House which is opposite to the university where they shall have to stay the minimum of six weeks. Today I try to go to the Enojima for the Thai party on my bike, because I am currently very crazy with it. I go to as far as Ofuna, which is two stations away from Tsujido. Then it is already in the afternoon, so I decide to give up and come back. It has been a good ride, no less than 100 kilometres. I am worn-out too because I get lost many times and have to go back and forth several times in order to find my way.

The trip is an impressive one and at times exciting, a very good experience for me. It is like nothing when you enter the Hodogaya tunnel on a bicycle. I feel like I was inside a computer game and in the virtual-reality, but it is real though. In fact I am not supposed to be in here on my bike, because this is a motorway! But somehow the flow of the traffic has led me here. I had been travelling along the footpath when it suddenly came to an end. Instead of going back, I got on the road hoping that there might be another one soon. I soon found myself in the middle of a fast-flowing traffic. To turn back now would mean to go against the traffic. By the time a truck driver feverishly gestured to me I had already understood that I was in the wrong place, a bicycle on the motorway. In replying to him I thought to myself, 'I know! But what can I do?' But there is little else I could do now except to follow the flow of the traffic until I find some better place to leave the road, so I bowed and say, 'Sumimasen!', to the other drivers. However, it leads me into this tunnel. I feel as though I was a model-aircraft inside the wind-tunnel. The inside of it is lit. Just before entering it another road joined

us on the left, and I could not have changed the lane lest I jeopardise not only my life but those of the other lawful road users. Travelling so fast myself, yet streaks of light overtake me from behind on both sides. I feel like a pilot in the Star War fleeing from his foes who were trying to shoot at me from behind with the bright laser beams. All the shots missed me by a hair's breadth. Their colour turned into red, and I could see them coming together in the distance in front of me. Finally I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Up until now the noise in here is like what you might have heard if you found yourself inside a conch shell. All these rich harmonies die down by leaps and bounds upon our approaching the exit to the tunnel. Being outside again, in the sunlight and the fresh air, I feel reborn. After that I leave the motorway through a toll gate without having to pay any fee. Bicycles are uncategorised and therefore not listed on the fee table.

Otsubo says on 4^{th} September 1996 that she had been to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 24 to 29 August, and came back to Japan in the morning of the 30^{th}.

She visited some of her friends who has been teaching Japanese at a university since May. She was impressed by the friendliness of the people and the wonderful nature there. And as for the food, it was simply incredible. Her friends took her out to the *yatai* (food-stalls) where they had the *satee* (yakitori), *roti canai* (pancakes and curry), and very sweet tea. Then they went to the beaches in Kuala Terenganu on the east coast. Terenganu once belonged to Siam. But even then its Thai name was Malay, as it was called 'Trangkạnụ'. So I guess it belongs here even before the British took it for the Malaysians and Malays. There were the city tour, river cruises and waterfalls. Then it was back to KL and the shopping spree.

I have been in Thailand. While there I stayed for two weeks in my hometown Chiangmai, which is up north, and then in Bangkok for another two weeks. In Bangkok where I used to live and work, I helped Ben arrange a garden for competition at one of the five-star hotels there. I hope that he would let me the result of the competition sometimes because I left for Japan before the event took place. Other than that I have met some new friends and went for a night out with the fencing club at the university where I used to study. I had been at a couple of parties, cycled around, played the piano, and swum in an outdoor swimming pool whenever I have time. I met some of my former teachers.

Two of my friends died, one from an accident, the other from cancer. The rest have either married, changed their job, or bought a new car.

I met most of those whom I planned to meet. I visited friends at both Telecomasia and Jasmine where I used to work. And I have done what

I had set out to do, that is bringing my bicycle back with me to Japan. I still have not received my MSc certificate. They could have sent it to the wrong address.

I enjoyed my trip to Thailand. In Chiangmai I often sat at the piano and played the song *Home sweet home*, but I can not even remember the tune now. I stayed one week in Bangkok, two in Chiangmai, and then another one in Bangkok.

I swam at the Chulalongkorn University's pool. It was outdoor, so I am now tanned all over. Among other things, I have both my passport and my obligatory Thai-citizen ID card renewed. I went to parties and met those people I know, some of whom did not think that I had been away but instead thought that I was in Thailand all the while. One of my teachers thought that I was still at the university struggling with my first degree. Teachers tend to look upon you as kids and underlings. Or else they might be too busy or have taught too many students.

With the bike, I took both of its wheels off and then put everything in the bike-bag which my mother had helped me make from an old cushion's case. Jāun had also been to Thailand when she had her wisdom-teeth removed. She went to Rayaung with her family and two of her friends. Apart from these, she had translated her fourth-year report into English because her Japanese teacher wants to see it. Ellen is still in Vienna and will stay there until 28 September. She agrees with me that it was an achievement my bringing the bicycle with me on the plane from Thailand to Japan. Einstein (1879 – 1955) says, 'Gravitation can not be held responsible for people falling in love'.

Today, that is 5^{th} September 1996 , I go on my bike to have my visa extended at Shibuya. So I am away from the university for nearly all day. I take my lunch box with me, so I had the fried rice for lunch at the US Army Station near Shibuya. The Thai word for a lunch box *pĭntǫ* is imported from the Japanese's *bentou*. After that I go to the Institute of Industrial Science of Tokyo University in Roppongi. I want to visit a friend of mine, Suradęj, who is going to graduate soon. He is three years my junior at the CU's ENG. But since I have not emailed to him first, I found out that he was not in. To me this means that he has already graduated. In Japan you always find someone at their laboratories unless they have already graduated and are merely waiting for the ceremony thereof.

Rick says on the 6^{th} September 1996 that he had visited Boston and New York while G says that his project is something to do with the SDH network for southern west-coast project. It is a new technology in the transmission system. The following day Rick still does not know the topic for his dissertation, but he wants to travel to Japan some day.

At UMIST in Manchester the HP has been down for a week according to Cū. She stays in Lambert until the 10^{th}. Ọ is with her boyfriend. Her department is going to fund her through the PhD. Cū also finds out later that her supervisor could also find some scholarships for her. But she wants to start working and besides does not want to teach.

Today, 7^{th} September, I go to the World PC Expo'96. It is being held at Makuhari Messe in Chiba, which is on the other side of the Tokyo Harbour. I come here on my bicycle. On my way here I really enjoyed the scenery. Tokyo has so many rivers and its harbour is very nice.

At the exhibition, I sit down to have my picture taken by a digital camera. The digital cameras are a reasonably new gadget. I receive one colour printout of my picture to keep as a souvenir. Technically speaking, the resolution of the print is excellent. But my picture does not look nice because I have been sweating all over on my way here on the bicycle. It took me four hours. I have a free ticket from Ḥūy, so there is no need to pay for the entrance.

I look at the virtual-reality screen displays. You wear something which looks like an eye-protection that one wears doing the welding. Inside, there are two screen displays, one for each eye. I am one moment hovering over the Big Ben, and the next swoop down toward the city and through its alleys and streets. I have to brace myself together and keep my hands close to my body for fear that they might hit something if I stick them out. The buildings and the lamp-posts on both side passed you by like real things. I have a plastic frame from this exhibition. So at home I put Cū's picture into it and put it on my table. According to Einstein, 'Things should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler'. What can be more simple!

On 8^{th} September 1996 I come to the Kitanomaru Park. From here I go to the Tokyo and the Kanda Station, a Confucian shrine called Yujima Seido, the Tokyo University where I see the famous Akamon (red gate) and have a look around inside of the university, and then the Ueno Park where I visited a shrine called the Nazu Shrine one kilometre to the north of it. In the park there are many ponds and lakes, and one of them is beautifully filled with lotuses. I stop at the Tokyo Hands in Shibuya, shop at Daiei on the Meguro *douri* (road), and then come back. Cū is moving to the Orient House in Granby Row next Wednesday. She may go to either the eastern European countries or the US following her study. *The bike lives, I live. The bike's gone, I'm gone* (Me, 10^{th} September 1996).

Ken says he is going to do the Kungfu until the day he dies. I shall have to tell him to put on a helmet or some protective gears. The Shaolin Style that he practises is well known in Thailand as the mythical boxing

of the *vad́* (temple) Sàolhin.

In swimming, I can do a non-stop butterfly reasonably with ease now, and feel good about it. I find it relaxing. I am a little scared about all the ado going on here about expecting a big earthquake in Tokyo. No one can predict an earthquake, but in this case they say that it is to be expected from the past statistics. Newspapers, I think in the US, have been talking about three minutes that will change the world. Ellen is going to Cambridge for her master degree. She said this since 6^{th} August.

Nhŭeng seems agog about Japanese girls. He thinks that I have a digital camera, so on 12^{th} September 1996 he says he wants me to send him some photos to him by email. There is a misconception in Thailand that all girls here are *ike ike* (easy), which can be no further away from the truth for all those whom I now know are respectable. But to him I say that there were sexy models posing on the stage at the World PC Expo where I had been, and it is true they were among the sexiest creatures I have seen on the surface of this planet. I only tell him that I only had my picture taken by one at the Canon booth there. No girls would have looked at me twice. Businessmen would never understand how one could possibly go to such an exhibition looking like a tramp the way I did. As it was, I took some pictures there with the digital camera, and then one of the exhibitors took one for me. As a cameraman I seldom have my picture taken, but that was what she insisted. This is a great country where, even at a big exhibition like this, they let you wander around for half an hour with their newest model of the digital camera, and know that you would bring it back to them. Out of *enryo* (consideration) I only used the camera for fifteen minutes when I took pictures of those who catwalk on the stage. Then we look at my masterpieces on the screen. The Thai word for *enryo* is *krẹngcaị*, which is closer to it than the English *consideration* does. Kạc's friend, Gomkṛij, lives in Kyoto. He also has a bicycle which he uses every morning to climb up a hill.

I love Japan. I would not have had I not been around on my bicycle. Most Japanese people will love their own country too if they had been to the countryside, far from the madding offices. This is a country where people respect you on your bike. The *mawari san* (policeman, *lit* Mr going-about) here go about on the bicycle. Passing Chiyoda on my way back I ask a policeman there the way when it was nearly 10 pm. He told me the way and then asked where I was from and from where I was coming. I told him both, then his eyes simply lit up and we stood there talking for no less than fifteen minutes. There are no boundaries in cycling. We could do well to abolish the saloon or the sedan cars together with their windscreens or windshields, and then adopt for our

respective countries the bicycle, even or the open sedan-chair, as the official means of transportation. Soliloquy (13^{th} September 1996),

> I want to find someone
> whom I can live for.
> Not much of a woman she has to be,
> this I never ask for more.

On 16^{th} September 1996 I try the lower-circle route of Tokyo, according to what is recommended in the book *Cycling Japan*. From Meguro station to Shinagawa, then follow the monorail track up to as far as the Tsukiji Wholesale Market only to find that is closed. So I visit the Buddhist temple at Tsukiji instead. After that, it is Ginza, the Imperial Palace, the carps-fishing place on the moat nearby, the British Council which is also closed, and then come back along the Aoyama Dori.

By exploring Tokyo on my bike, I have come to love the city. Last Sunday there was a festival. People carry shrines of their villages and processed along the smaller lanes, everywhere through out Japan. I went and have a look along the roads, as well as to a shrine where there was a fair. Booths were set up for selling food and setting up games for people to pay and play. Then on Monday, which was also another holiday I still do not know what it was, I went on my bicycle to Ginza. The whole street was cut off from the traffic and people were allowed to walk freely about. The same is true for a few other places like Shibuya and Harajuku.

On 19^{th} September 1996 I go to the centre of Tokyo, to British Council. There is a library there, but it is very expensive to become a member. The scenery around that area is really nice. There is a big moat both wide and deep. On one side of this there is a forest and a railway track, while on the other side a street, bicycle track, and lots of buildings. I shall bike to my heart's content, PhD or no. For the moment, long live cycling!

For one reason or another I find myself saying to Ng, 'Why don't you search for control systems' sites around the world, on the Net. Then you can email to inquire each place whether they would like you to apply or not. By doing it this way I should think that you can avoid situations where there are far too many applicants. You will get rejected more often, that is certain. But according to the law of a salesman, you increase your chance of success.' To which he replies, 'I think your suggestion of the salesman idea is good'.

A little learning is a dangerous thing. On 22^{nd} September 1996 I suppose that I am too weak, and too attached. I probably need to become more detached. These past several days had been a happy time

for me, since I received three letters one after another all of which are long waited for. They are from both New Zealand and Japan. I must reply them quickly this time. There had been a big typhoon for a few days now. Fortunately it finally stopped today. Tempests are exciting things and I love them. This morning I cycled home through the typhoon. Just when I was about to reach the last left-turn, I pulled on the brakes so hard because it was down hill. The front brake snapped loose. The cable was torn cleanly off. Tonight, before coming here, I disassembled all the brakes systems, that is to say, I pulled the cable out as well. Then I repaired the thing that is broken, and made a new paths of cables for both. Made in Taiwan, the bik was assembled in Bangkok. Give me five more times doing the disassembling like this and I am certain that I will make a better bike specialist than the one who put this thing together in Bangkok two years ago. Tomorrow is a holiday, but I still do not know what makes it so.

In Ohio it is around 10 – 20°C. For £40 Pò could sell for Cū the CD player that used to be mine, a remarkable feat which proves that he is a businessman. In fact all those who take a scholarship from the Thai government to do the postgraduate study abroad are businessmen. Here the wind blew very strongly, and it rained for more than 24 hours at one time. From the university to my home, just before reaching the last left turn there is a stretch of about 300 metres of a down-hill slope. I always let go of my pedals during that part. It is morning already. I had been in my office since the tempest stopped last night. The sun is coming up. I have just had my visa extended last week, for another year. To be honest, I do not expect that I shall graduate. The odds are against me so.

Dęj is back from a conference in Hungary, 27 September, and Táo had offered Cū a scholarship, 8 October. I have just come back from Atagawa which is three hours by car and to the south of Tokyo. I had attended a conference there. I also talked there for about half an hour about my research. The town was close to the sea, a very nice and small town famous for hot mineral spring. We stayed at a hotel and my room looked down toward the bay, which was really beautiful. I quite enjoy the Japanese-styled hot bath. I like the one which is out door where you can comfortably sit in the warm water while just above your head the air is cold.

Cū plans (9 Oct.) to go to Spain next month. In Cambridge (10 Oct.) Professor Meerless has just won the Nobel prize in Economics. Ellen says she wants to introduce me to a lovely Lanna girl whose name turns out to be, of all the names, 'Lanna'. Here in Tokyo, 12 October, there is an earth-quake just now! I think that we usually show only our good

side to people, even to ourselves.

Ellen kind of presses me on 13^{th} October 1996 when she asks whether it is true a Thai man does things only for fun. I am a Lanna, but I answer her just the same. Thai people like an easy, trouble-free life. 'Doing things only for fun', the word for *fun* in Thai being *sànuk*. Thai people usually take pride in their cultural heritage. They thought that the Thai language's tonal system covers more domain of all the enunciation, of all other languages combined, than any other languages of the world, but a professional linguist knows better. They thought that the classical Thai dance was the most exquisite and elegant one in the world, but it is only a unique one as such. Thinking that something is fun, is probably one way to deceive and encourage yourself at such times when things that need to be done get difficult. Thai people who live abroad normally think of their home country as being such romantic a place, and likewise returning to it such romantic an experience. But once you touched down at the Ḍaunmuang Airport in Bangkok and had to go through that dog-gone of a traffic of that city, you soon faces the reality of life which never is as what one thought. Thais imagine their country as the most peaceful on earth, but we have some of the best species of murderer in the world. In the end, 'Virtue is what virtue, not politeness, does'.

'That doesn't sound like you,' says she on 17 October, 'I thought the academic work is the least thing you would ever worry about'.

'Mais oui!', I think to myself. 'But within my research group,' I tell her, 'this way of thinking seems to be unthinkable. So I have to deceive myself that I do care the world in my research'.

'Your email gives me a good laugh,' she says, 'thanks for the good beginning of today. Oh ja, I think you have an identity problem, or at least you have doubt about your identity'.

'Well, I don't know what I had written that made you laugh', I sound somewhat offended, 'Whatever it might be, it was never meant to be laughed at anyway, not in the first place. Though I am glad now that at least you have something to start your day good, even if it were at the expense of the integrity of my script'. I believe only in heavenly not earthly identity. She needs never heed me.

Lanna interrupts with, 'I studied at the Montfort College too. My ID number when I studied in CU begins with 34. I have just come to Cambridge to do a PhD in Operations Management'. And the topic of the conversation is in this manner unexpectedly switched into those of the more earthly ones, which could be of no interests to us here.

'I am an *Einzel-gänger*', Ellen, 18^{th} October 1996 . ('Und ich auch!') It is at most five minutes by bike to anywhere within Cambridge for her, her college, the computer rooms, the library, *etc.*

'Yesterday I was actually sleeping while writing the mail to you', I tell her. 'I wrote about half way through, then I nodded off about one or two hours, woke up again though not fully awake, continued with the writing, reread it just before sending, found out even I could make neither head nor tail of it, started to delete all the parts I did not understand thus reducing its size by half until it was what you saw, for then decided to send it without any further ado'.

'I am at uni today and have three classes', Asami, 24^{th} October 1996 . She had been in New Zealand as an AFS student and also knows Charlie. I invited her over to out university one day when there was a party at the Centennial Memorial Building.

The party got somewhat noisier after she has left as representatives from several countries went upon the stage to sing songs in their mother tongues. There were the Russians, the Chinese, philipanios, Brazilians, some from one of the Arabic countries which I can never figure out the one from the other despite my having known several people from there, and so on. I thought that the party lasted until about 8 pm, though I was not so sure either because I did not bring my wrist-watch along with me. It keeps coming off from the wrist of my right hand where I always put it, so I have been keeping it at home for fear that it would fall off while I am on my bicycle.

Ellen is being a vegetarian on and off. Now she is eating meats again, 30^{th} October.

Ken has also written to Asim but gets no reply, or so he says today 12^{th} November 1996 . He sits in his office having a cold, and wish he had stayed at home this morning. An strong encouragement arrive from Ellen two days later, for she says, 'Intelligence can not be measured in a narrow sense. Do have confidence in your ability, have faith in yourself'. I should remember to do this. Amazingly Rick, who is currently in the US and thriving, also has the same problem as myself. I have always thought that people in those countries respect individuality. Obviously I need to be more informed. In a way I should have known this, for if they could bunch fifty countries together this easily how could you possibly expect individuality. Chains like the Mac Donald, for instance, are nothing but the *jidou hanbai ki* (automatic vending machines) in Japan. He does not like the system there. 'For example,' he says, 'they want everyone in the same group to have blind unity and do things together. But I don't want unity, nor do I want to feel the group as being a family'. According to what he says, they must be crazy over there too. I think what they really need is training in some martial art, such as would make them become a decent guru instead of a bully. Now he needs to fix the stepping gear on the rear-wheel that has simply broken down.

Soon I become one year older. Ellen knows about this, so she consoles me on 21^{st} November 1996 saying, 'every old man has had his blooming youth, and every young kid is growing older'. She goes on to tell me to keep my mental youth. 'Youth is a state of mind', she says. Listening to her I can not help but sing to myself, 'You may be 40 but you can't stop rocking to the beat'. Between us, she is the more spiritual who, in a way, is unusual as a woman for she believes in no fortune-tellers.

The autumn is here. I explore the city and go to the Tokyo Tower, to Hibiya Park where the colours in the flower beds and those of the leaves are beautiful beyond descriptions.

At the research room at TIT.

Katsuhisa: I am very disappointed about you. You have failed to meet the deadlines I have set several times. I doubt your ability and I doubt the quality of your M.Sc. obtained from UMIST. That is to say that I don't think the Control Systems Centre there has got any passable standard.

Kit: I am sorry I made you think that way.

Katsuhisa: What subjects did you learn during your masters?

Kit: Classical Control, modern control, signal processing, abstract maths for control engineers, *etc etc.* Altogether approximately 15 subjects.

Prof. Furuta: Sounds very bad. Tell me what books were used for each course.

Kit: Can I make a list for you later? I cannot remember many of them. About five books were used for each subject. [*actually it was more than five*, Kit]

Katsuhisa: But you can not remember the content? Then what was the purpose of using five books. Here we use only one. A better one than yours. And students are required to memorise it. They should do. And I say again that your course at UMIST is mediocre to ours. [*actually it is the other way round for all I know, if only I might judge*, Kit; *That, thou mayst not!*, Jesus]

(after thinking, still flabbergasted from what he has heard)

Kit: But, how can one remember everything? Certainly there are things we can, and had better look up when we want to use.

Katsuhisa: No, if you don't remember them then your knowledge is zero. What if you got stuck in an island without any book. Unless you can remember all, you don't know anything. I mean it.

Kit: (*thinking about the island conjecture, wondering whether there is any significant probability for the said situation to occur to all the control engineers on earth, and coming to the conclusion that were it be so one should attempt trying to be a good fisherman rather than to stubbornly*

persist in being a control engineer, but, having thought that far rather said) I see. Then I might be too stupid, and Ph.D. is not for me. I will think about it to see if I should consider quitting.

Katsuhisa: With your brain level, which is very low, I don't think that you will be able to get a Ph.D. from here.

Kit: Well, I don't mind if I don't get it. What ever happens is fine with me.

Katsuhisa: You have ruined the reputation of UMIST and you have ruined the reputation of Chulalongkorn University. All my previous student from Chula were the opposite to you. They were brilliant. Now my regard for UMIST is zero.

Kit: If you choose to think that way, what can I do. And if you can base your judgement for an institution on your judgement for only one of its students, then I have nothing else to say. For me, I think that I had better look at the university's research reports instead.

Katsuhisa: Would you like me to tell the government to stop funding you?

Kit: That is beyond my power to decide. But yes, it is within yours and you could rightly do that. I wouldn't beg you against it, neither do I oppose to you if that happens to be what you have got in mind.

Katsuhisa: You are in our team. You must copy the way that others in the team do things. I cannot afford having any unorthodox way of thinking and behaving around lest other students might follow it.

Kit: (*reminded of what he has read about some brain-washing social system*) I see! I am sorry. (*but for what? for stupidity? I thought that it was not a crime to be stupid!!!*) Yes, I am sorry sir.

I am in a *big* trouble!

Misfortune seldom comes singly. If you quarrel with your boss, whom you think tries to bully you, others will also try to do the same to you too, if simply for his own safety. We are all insecure creatures. By 20^{th} January 1997 I have a trouble with one Vietnamese student at my group who is, I think, both jealous, selfish and mean. If he does not go away within one year, I think that I am leaving Japan. He always shows that he is better than me and jeers at me whenever other people turn their eyes away. I used to have a similar problem with one British yob back in Manchester, as you would probably have recalled. This one here is a cunning imps who has a pair of eyes which at times look at me exactly like how a very serious psychic would do. Imagine. . .I cannot work with him around. And even the idea that he might pops up at anytime frightens me a lot. I mean, this is not a zoo or an asylum, is it?

'To remember is to understand.' This only means that remembering implies understanding. You may say that you understand something if

you can remember it. But the opposite is not true, that is understanding does not necessarily imply remembering. To this effect you may understand everything, and yet are able to remember nothing. For the same subject, I always get an A if the exams are opened-book while if they are closed-book an F in its place.

Spare them Lord, for they know not what they do! Each of them falls a prey to the pressure that he himself tries to put on others. It is a simple law of physics. You push at somebody, he pushes back at you. Even if you were to push at a chair. In this case it can never push back at you. God does that for it.

Sujin starts working as a lecturer at CU this week. Luk is working in Teddington.

In all the frenzy of her swotting, Ellen finds imagination enough to write on 23^{rd} January 1997 about, 'such a beautiful place where the sun is shining, and you can swim in the blue sea and lay on the white-sand beach, maybe under the huge coconut trees and enjoying the tropical fruits'. And Rick is going to Arizona, Nevada and California next week. None of these people are nomads. All of them are elites, but while working hard they also live their lives. Otherwise, the world would have been nothing but an asylum. Nok is now back in Thailand teaching. I know Lụkhyị through Mọ. She is a lecturer in Pharmacy who works with Mọ's mother at the Tạkfā̱ Hospital in Nȧgaursȧvarṛġa.

I go to Shibuya on 29^{th} January 1997 wanting to buy a computer, but come back having bought in its place an electric piano. Next week it will be delivered to my home. With it I will be able to practice whenever I feel like to, using the headphone. I will borrow some piano sheet-musics and books from local libraries and play them.

'After all, a degree is one thing and the experience of doing it another', I say to myself , 3^{rd} February 1997 , 'I value the experience more than the degree'. I often think, '*Shigata ga nai* Lord' (it can not be helped), 'A supervisor may choose to be harsh'. 'Bullying' is in Japanese *ijime*, 'to bully' *ijimeru*, and 'bullied' *ijimerareta*. There is nothing like a first-hand experience of anything. On the 1^{st} there was a Peace Salon Concert.

'After having lived in Europe for almost 10 years, I am tired of Europe, tired of being a foreigner and the *non-belonging-anywhere* feeling', Ellen, 14^{th} February 1997 . She is both homesick and worried about her parents. 'But I am afraid that this idea is just an illusion,' she carries on, 'Having lived in Europe for such a long time, I don't know whether I can get used to the Asia[n] way of life again'. I know what she means, for I have felt the same. You lose some of your ambitions, but do not want to admit it. But on the other hand, are all ambitions not meant to be lost? If only we knew how to lay each and every one of them down

with grace, and neither plonking them down nor fallen in disgrace.

I want to drive a car from Japan to Thailand, passing through China, and for this I want to find a sponsor. But I have no contacts, and that is the problem. It is a dream that currently occupies my mind, and so I talk about it with people who I know, which are namely Aggy, Ai, B, Ball, Bhạvan, Bongśxa, two Boy's, Bug, Cộ, Dẹb, Dharrm, God [from Godzilla], Ḥaun, Hiroko, Ḥūy, Jane, Jāun, Jay, Jiang, Kái, Kàng, Kṛiṣṇa, Lek, Mhụ, Namọ, Nas, Nhăuy, Nhŭeng, Nok, Ọ́, Òn, Pạu, Pelé, Pùm, Tàm, Tị and Ỵhăị, and also possibly to Dīw, Mhoay and (another) Nhăuy.

Ellen thinks, on 19^{th} February 1997 , that it is not too dangerous to drive in China. But the road is very tough, or she guesses there may be no road at all in some of the places. She says she could ask some Chinese to see if it is feasible, and if it is she wants to come along with me. It is going to be adventurous and exciting, she thinks. But she wonders whether we could survive. I may not even be able to look after myself on such a trip. Now that she might join me, I suddenly fear for her safety, and I imagine the various situations where I may need to die for her. I do not know how to attack someone. But it would be impossible to try to protect somebody without attacking some other people. Martial Arts train your reflex actions, which is governed by the subconscious mind which in turn never attacks. Therefore those Arts that attacks for the sake of doing damage to others are either tainted or mistaken. Ellen wants to bring more people into this. But for me, apart from the welcomed sponsors I would rather go alone. I know how to operate cameras, cooking, interest in languages, and some mechanics. She is from China, but to me she belongs to something bigger, that is the Whole. Wholly holy, any country would be too small for her. 'Little countries ain't small', or so a friend of mine jests.

'Have you heard about a story that one person was so thirsty that he drank the poisonous water to reduce his thirst, even though he knew that the water was poisonous,' she says, 'I am in a similar situation, but with a less degree of *thirst*', We poison one another. Earthly things always find reasons to kill their heavenly brothers. What they do not realise is that they can also be equally heavenly. If they did, they would never have killed.

I think that without a job, I would soon get bored. Much the same way that I would, if I don't swim. Without a wife and friends I think I will be very lonely. And I would love to watch my own child grows up. It would be more meaningful than having a most successful career.

Tomoko is studying psychology at the Gakushuin University. She will get a job and not go to the graduate school, 27^{th} February. She had been

an AFS student in New Zealand. Surely the Cold War ended because of the ambassadorial AFS students like us, not by the arm races. Ellen is going to the US. She is worried about the earthquakes in San Francisco and the crime rate in New York.

On Sunday 9th March 1997 Ṭhing and I together try the Yurikamome line. I walk around in Shiba Ura, looking at the monorail and the Rainbow Bridge. I visit the Shiba *kouen* (park) where the Zoujou *ji* (temple) is. I walk past the Kyouritsu *yakuka* (department of medicine) University. Then I meet Ṭhing at the railway station from where our train starts.

Between 16 and 25 March 1997 with the Seishun-18 ticket in my pocket I go to Kyūshū. On the first day of the trip I pass Atami, then visit the Nagoya *jou* (castle). The moat is all dried up and there are a few sheep grazing in it. But the masonries here are amazing. The corner stones define the sharp edges of the high walls which rise in slopes of accelerating steepness to the top of the walls where you stand watch. This castle is a classic example of the Japanese Art. The copper-plated roofs are all green from oxidation. Two *shachihoko*'s guard the two topmost hips. They look as though they had jumped up from the moats and landed there on their chin. All the sakura trees in the garden stands naked with neither leaves nor flowers. Nagoya is the third big capital of Japan. The following day, 17th March, I see the Seto *naikai* (inland sea) which sits amidst the *honshū* (main island), Kyūshū and Shikoku. Its is known in English as the Inland Sea of Japan. There is a long bridge connecting the Main Island to Shikoku. I get off at Hiroshima and walk across the Kyoubashi *gawa* (river) until I reach the *gembaku* (atomic bomb) Dome. Here stood the *sangyou shourei kan* (Industrial Promotion Building) until 6th August 1945 when it found itself within 150-metre radius of the first atomic bomb that men use against ourselves. There can be no less than 53 bridge in Hiroshima where the Ōta River branches in to five different rivers that enter the sea. I visit the park in the memorial to those 200,000 people who died because of that bomb. It is in the vicinity of the Dome, on the other side of the river where there is also a museum to visit. Then I go to the Hiroshima Castle and climb the steps up to where the beautiful castle stands. From here you see a good view of the city. After Hiroshima it is the Seto Inland Sea again. We pass a place called Yamaguchi and then Shimonoseki.

Hiroshima was completely flattened, but it was innocent human beings here who faced the worst of the atrocities. The Hiroshima Castle was incinerated, evaporated. In 1952 some American soldiers were visiting the Dome the ruins of which were otherwise fenced off. What you see standing in its place is the ghost of its former self raised up in 1958. In

1959 at the *heiwa kinen kouen* (peace memorial park) there gathered for the *heiwa koudou* (peace movement) people from among other places the the European federation against atomic armaments, the federal republic of Germany, France, Hungary, the USSR, and Yugoslavia. Banners were held which say, 'Gensuibaku kinshi!' (stop the atomic and hydrogen bombs). The works for preserving the Dome in its present form was carried out in 1967.

On the 18th of March which follows I am in Nagasaki and walk across the Ōhashi to the *heiwa kouen* (peace park). Here the Peace Statue sits like the Zeus, with the right hand pointing towards the sky and the left towards the left, the gesture of which may be written in the romanised system of ASL that I created in 2002 as 'bumebemuwiu'. Here a group of students, who come here on their *shūgaku ryoukou* (school trip), stand in rows to have their group photos taken. I go to the Shūhou *jinja* (Shinto shrine) where you walk up some steps to reach the front gate. Then I go to the Glover Garden from where you can see the beautiful views of the Nagasaki Harbour in which I see some ships and tankers. In the garden there are flowers, for instance the *mokuren* (lily magnolia, Magnolia liliflora) and the tulips the growing and the bulbs of which became a mania during the early 17th century in Holland. The *romen densha* (streetcars or trams) are still in use here. The last time I saw one was in Budapest in 1990, so I am all excited about it when I see them here. Then I look at the site of the former Dutch trading post on Dejima. Founded in 1634, the real site has the area of approximately 4,000 *tsubo* (3.954 sq.yd. or approximately 3.3 sq.m.) and the Dutch traders were moved there. I walk along a canal lined by the weeping willows. There is also the *megane* (glasses) Bridge, itself and the reflection of which form and image that looks like a pair of round spectacles. I stay at the Youth Hostel tonight. This morning I have already met my friend Yukari who is from here. She has given me some suggestions on what to do. It was her who suggested the Glover Garden. On 19th March I go to the Unzen National Park where there is the *jigoku* (*lit* hell), which is the area where there are large grounds of geothermal activities. There is a monument of Christian Martyrs. Vegetation here includes the *sasa* (bamboo grass) that covers the ground, and the *akamatsu* (*lit* red pine, Pinus densiflora Sieb. et Zucc.). The latter is found in all the four biggest islands of Japan. The word *matsu* means *pine* (Pinus). Japan originally had two types of pine, one is the *akamatsu* mentioned above while the other is the *kuromatsu* (*lit* black pine, Pinus thunbergii Parl.). I climb up to the Ya *take* (peak). The sun is shining brightly and summer is in the air. This peak is unique. Sitting here you can see around you on all sides, and yet it does not feel like a bald peak because immediately below all

around are trees. There is a golf course below and by the town is a lake. It is warm up here because of the sun, but the breezes are cool. A good place it is, for a *hinatabokko* (sunbathe). Down below I walk around the thermal grounds again. There is the *baba* (old woman) Rocks that seems to be nothing in particular. The boiling mud really boils. Steam vents from every nooks to tell us that it is very hot underground. I have come here on a bus from Nagasaki and will be catching the returning one in the evening. At the National Park's Visitor Centre I sit in the sun waiting for the bus to arrive. There is here a bed where the *habotan* (ornamental kales) are grown. Nearby is the Gensei *numa* (marsh). Back in Nagasaki I climb up the ill to look at the city at night.

On Thursday 20$^{\text{th}}$ March, the following day, I catch the train to Fukaoka. Here I visit the Nishi *kouen* (park), from where you can see the sea and the express way along it. Then I go to the Ōbori Park, Fukuoka *shiroato* (site or ruins of a castle) from where one can see the Fukuoka Dome, I retrace my steps to Kurume, which is from Fukuoka in the direction of Nagasaki, and here look at the Kurume Castle. From here back to Honshū I take the less frequented line which passes through the forests in the heart of Kyūshū, passing among other stations Mii, Tanushimaru, Yoake, Amagase, Yunohira, Kaku, and then Ōita and Beppu. The train passes through ten tunnels. This is no place for everyday's tourists, so it is much different from Nagasaki, or even Unzen. It is not only the nature but also the solitude of the places we pass, the slow paces of life, and that sincere, non-competing country feeling, that I soon fall in love with this place even though I only manage to see one third of it by the time it gets dark. And with the love of the place follows that love of this land, Japan. So the first time I tell my self that this is definitely a lovable country and culture is here, somewhere between the stations Kurume and Yoake, which include namely and respectively Minami Kurume, Mii, Zendouji, Chikugo Kusano, Tanushimaru, Chikugo Yoshii, Chikugo Zenzoku, and Chikugo Ōi. After that the world outside the train is dark and I can no longer see the countryside. But the local people still get on and off the train and their talks I still overhear that tell the tales. It is no stories of their lives that I try to make out, but the way they think and how their minds are shaped by this exquisite setting of their *furusato* (home).

The following day, 21$^{\text{st}}$ March, I get off the train and walk around in Karuga, Miyoshi, Bingo Ochiai, Toujou, and Niimi, which means that I criss-cross into the southern part of Honshū instead of going along the main lines on the eastern coast. Then another day is over. On 22nd March 1997 , a Saturday, I meet in Nara Emiko, who had also been an AFS student in New Zealand, and her friend. They show me around the city. We go to the Koufuku *ji* (temple) which was founded in AD

710. Then we visit the Toudai Temple where there is the Daibutsu, the Buddha image built in AD 751 which is the biggest wooden structure in the world. Both the Koufuku and the Toudai temples are among the seven big temples in Nambu of Edo. We walk in the Nara Park where there are *shika* (deer, Cervus nippon) around.

The deer found in Japan are normally the *enji shika* (Cervus nippon yesoensis). This is the same group as those deer found in China, for examples *C. n. mandarinus*, *C. n. grassianus*, and *C. n. kopschi*. In Japan there are also other types of deer, for instance the *kyūshuu. jika* (C. n. nippon), *kerama jika* (C. n. keramae), and *yaku shika* (C. n. yakushimae). Those deer found in Taiwan are called *taiwan jika* (C. n. taiouanus).

Purikura (print club) are those sticker-making booth you see on the street and wherever young people are expected to be found. You get into a booth, put in some coins, choose the background picture and who know what, and then look at the camera while it takes your picture. The print-out comes off in the 10×13 cm, that is in the metric units, containing 16 pictures that come in four rows. But the sizes of each picture, however, are in inch, that is to say, $\alpha \times \beta$ where $\alpha = 15/16$ inch and $\beta = \alpha/\sqrt{2}$.

On 23$^{\text{rd}}$ March I come to Kyoto. Here I visit the Nishi Hongan Temple and the Nijou Castle. There are some *tsubaki* (camellia, Camellia japonica) in the castle. On street along my way here I saw for the first time the vending machine that sells men's magazines and sex videos. Then I walk along the Marutamachi Road to the Old Imperial Palace After it is dark I walk to the eastern part of the city and walk around the hill there. It is a long walk, and the drizzles have come, so today is rather exhausting for me. From here I go to Koube and explore the town at night. On 24$^{\text{th}}$ March I explore Ōsaka. I walk along the Dojima River and see some students wearing the kimono taking pictures on their graduation. Then I walk to the Ōsaka Castle with its wide moats which remind me of the Royal Palace in Tokyo. From within the castle you can see the Nissei Stadium. Walking in the castle I meet three girls who ask me to take a picture for them. We talk together and I take one picture of us using my the tiny tripod that I have. We decide that we shall do things together for the rest of the day, and thereby I walk with them to the Yodo River and then to the twin buildings that is connected to each other on top. We go up to the upper floor to look at the world from the bird's-eye view. Then I walk with them to the Ōsaka Station because they have to leave for Tokyo. After they have gone I walk around until it gets dark, and then explore the Dojima River at night. Then I come back to the station and stay in a capsule hotel for the first time. These

hotels are interesting. Instead of a room or a bed you only have a hole on the wall to sleep in. Employees come here to sleep if they drink until too late to get home. On the 25$^{\text{th}}$ I go to Fukui and have a look at the Fukui Castle. On the train from Fukui to Kanazawa to Kurobe you can see the mountain ranges with the snow-covered mountains. From Kurobe to Noetsu the train goes along the coast. I walk around in Noetsu and then catch the train back to Tokyo. During my trip I have missed the sakura-blooming by only a matter of weeks.

Ellen writes on 21^{st} March 1997 . Ellen philosophises whenever she is bored and tired. When she is filled with ambition she always feel like being a student in economics again. 'Many economists believe that they have a mission to change the world for better,' she says. She tells me that people live their lives differently and everyone has different experiences, but we all think and live alike. Human beings feel uncomfortable if they are different. She wants to be different but she fears loneliness. 'Loneliness is the common feeling of all great creators. If you could create the world, you would experience the God's loneliness', she quotes.

But I think that God is beyond everything because he is all things, the Superset. Therefore, regarding happiness, He is happiness but not vice versa, that is to say, happiness is not him. And likewise loneliness and other things, in fact everything in the universe. The two sayings, namely that *there can be only one god*, and that *God is the Superset*, are equivalent to each other. To prove this, first let A be the first sentence and B the second. It is easy to see that B implies A, that is if God is the Superset then there can be only one god. To prove the remaining condition, A implies B, suppose the contrary, A but not B, that is there is one god but this god is not the Superset. Then the Superset necessarily contains the god, and therefore it is also a god and a different one since it has one atom more than the other. This contradicts with our first assumption A, so it could never be. Therefore A and B are equivalent to each other.

Spring has come to Cambridge overnight sometime during the third week of March. Again it is Ellen on 26^{th} March 1997 who wrote me the following. 'Suddenly the sky become so high and blue, the sun shines, the trees blooms and the grass turns into green. People take off their thick, heavy clothes and walk around in light ones, with their mood also light. The tiny city centre is always filled by groups of tourists coming by coach. Punts start to float in the river Cam again'. She would not mind doing a PhD here simply to enjoy the atmosphere. She thinks that only students may enjoy atmospheres, since they do not have to fight for their lives. She is in a dilemma that whenever she has the mood she never has the time, but when she finally has the time she no longer has

the mood. 'I realise that it is me who make thing go against my wish,' she says, 'Anyway, life is simple and easy when you don't try to reason it'.

I tell Ǫ́ that when I was in Kyūshū I sometimes slept on the floor at a train station. I feel very safe in Japan where nobody robs or steals things from you. But Ǫ́ thinks otherwise. She says on 2nd April that she wish she were a man so that she could do some outrageous things like that. To her, this country is too dangerous. Even in her everyday life she has met with drunken or mad people, molesters, sexual harassments, and Yakusa gangsters. The following day my father writes when he says, 'You are very lucky that you have been to many places in Japan. I hope you enjoy life there'.

From the end of March onwards Tokyo is filled with the *sakura* (cherry) blossoms. On the 28th I meet at TIT with Mọ, Pạu and Tàm for the *hanami* (cherry blossom viewing). On 31st March I go to the Ueno Park where you find yourself under a continuous canopy of the sakura. After that I goto Shijuku and explore the streets and buildings there. I go up to the 53rd floor of the Shinjuku Centre Building where there is the *muryou* (free) *tenboudai* (observation platform). From up here you can look at the beautiful view of the Meiji *jingū* (shrine). Then I go to another building, the Sumitomo, and go up to the 51st floor to watch the sunset. After it is dark I explore the area at night and climb up the Nomura Building.

On 10*th* April 1997 there is a fair at the university where all the clubs introduce their activities. I have a look around and find at least two of them interesting. One of them is the mountaineering and skiing clubs, another the boat (canoe) club. I go with the boat club to a river together with a group of many first year students, and try my hand on canoeing for the first time. I liked it very much and plan to do more canoeing with them. We are here at the river from afternoon until the sun set. The weather is perfect and the atmosphere is nice with the romantic sun setting. The feel of the wind against your body, together with the boat cutting its way across the water, uplift your spirit.

On 12th April there is a meeting at the Jigen Temple for those who want to help organise the Thai *songkrạn* (water-pouring) festival here tomorrow. Here I meet Megumi who has also come to help. At night I explore Shibuya and look at the street lights. I am only going to perform the blacklight blaungs. On 13th April the *songkrạn* (water-pouring) festival goes smoothly. The *goang blaung* probably already existed during the Ȧyudhȧyạ Period (15th – 18th century). The *blaung fai* (torch-blaung) is probably an Ȧyudhȧyạ adaptation of the *goang blaung*. Around 1980 Siddhibaur Drongsatẏa introduced the blacklight

blaung, and around 1981 Caturatṅa Ratànàjayśrị, then the drum-major of the school marching band of the Montfort College, trained by the *saṃnak ḍạḅ* (sword school) Àyudhàyạ, were performing the flag-blaung, which is essentially the spinning of the *blaung* (pole) with a flag. A very long pole was used for this, and his flag was huge. In March 2000 Aṃnạc Gịtàbarrṇạ and Kittiśakdxi Nhŭy Tịyàbandha introduced the flags-blaung which uses two flags for each pole, and used it to perform *A Night at the Opera* at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok on the 18th and the 19th. It is possible to write the last name above in Thai as 'tyaban', and this can also be the Japanese word which is the same as 'chaban' the Japanese pronunciation of which is very similar to the English, 'Japan'.

Nhan teaches Yhị who has recently graduated to become a physician. On 29th April she tells me that he is going to the UK after the graduation to study sport medicine. May passes by without much events. Ọ́ also has an electric piano. But she only plays pop musics now.

Ỵhing starts teaching Thai to seven Japanese on 4th April at the Ḅuràbạ University. Ellen might go to San Francisco in September. She needs to find a job soon. Meanwile, 10^{th} July 1997 , she has just come back with her flat mates from a walk. She says, 'We went to the coffee shop *Clowns* for cakes and coffee and then took a walk around the King's college, watching people punting on the River Cam. The sun is shining brightly, trees and green green grass radiate laziness'.

I have been teaching Thai to Hiroko who is a most diligent student and is doing very well. She teaches me Japanese in return, but I am not as good a student as she is. It is interesting how one gains more understanding by teaching. The process of pulling everything together before one expounds to someone is essential to the learning of the teacher. When her turn comes, she would let me read some article from a newspaper and then she would correct me as I go along. The trouble is, I never do any revisions or homework and I never remember anything after our lessons. She shows me an advertisement of a part-time job to teach swimming at a *Chū Gakkou* (intermediate school), and I go there to apply. It is now the summer holidays and in Japan the hottest month is August. When it is hot, it is humid and hot and humid. There is nowhere you can escape to, unless you are in an air-conditioned room. Nakaura stays at our laboratory day and night, so he is happy because the room is air-conditioned.

I teach swimming from 28 – 30 July, then 6 and 8 August 1997. Our students are from 12 to 15 years old, both boys and girls. I find it hard to believe at first that anyone here should be unable to swim. I thought that everyone must have already learnt how to swim since their younger years here in Japan.

Between 31st July and 3rd August 1997 I join a home-stay program of the Young Women Christian Association and in Shizuka Ken stay at Yoriko and Mitsuru's place. Paum comes back form Bangkok around 5th August. She has changed to a new supervisor in Spring. Now she works for a British advisor, on live Video technology, and image processing. She plays tennis, white water rafts, and goes to the amusement park. On the 8th she says that she likes Osaka but not Tokyo, though she has couple of friends studying here.

Between 10 and 14 August 1997 I travel by the Seishun-18 ticket again, this time to Hokkaido in the north. On Sunday 10th I board the train from the Senzoku station without showing anybody my ticket because there is still no one at the entrance this early. This is one of the rare stations in Tokyo where there is no turnstiles. It is a nice day, and the air makes you feel so fresh. I like the trains outside Tokyo because you have the seats that face along the direction of the railway line, instead of facing sidewise with your back against the window as is the case with the trains in big cities. It is a long ride. We only stop a few times when I change trains, and at these occasions I manage to walk around, to a river in general.

In the upper part of Honshū the main railway lines do not follow the eastern coast-line. Therefore I travel inland, among the mountains, until I reach Akita. From here I go further seven stations to as far as Hachirougata when the train stops. I will have to wait here for the first train tomorrow. It is already pitch dark when I arrive here. I only manage to find a corner on the platform to spread my sleeping-bag, climb inside it and go to sleep. There is another student doing a similar thing, but he sleep outside, beside the entrance. You are not supposed to climb over the low fence to sleep on the platform as I did, but nobody cares. I feel safer in here, and I am causing no troubles besides. Anyway a small town like this is better than a big city like Akita if you have to be on the street. I wake up in the morning not long before the first train departs. It is cloudy today, Monday 11th. Outside the station there is a long stretch of mural mosaics which is simply wonderful.

From Akita you may also take a train to Oka in the Oka Peninsula. Not far from Hachirougata is the Hachirougata reclaimed land and tideland lake. The water is regulated through a channel between Tennou and Funakoshi stations.

Nothing is what it seems. Nowhere can you find a better example for this than in Japan. Japanese people never knows how to read the names of each other, that is to say, they are never certain the *kanji* (Chinese characters) are to be read in proper names. For example, if you look up the 'O' in the town's name 'Oka' in your dictionary you may find the

instruction for reading it as *dan* or *nan*. 'Then wherefore the *O*?', you may ask, and it is well that you should ask, for often nobody knows. In theory you can read anything any way you like. Or vice versa, you may write anything and then dictate with the *hiragana* or *katagana* (Japanese syllables or syllabic systems) how you want it read.

By the time I reach Hirosaki it has already rained. There are still some drizzles. It is somewhat better by the time we are in Aomori, and I walk to the sea. This town is in a bay. From here the train goes to Kanita where I walk to the sea. The street is on an embankment. There are breakwaters both on the shore below this and further away off-shore. Houses are built right to the very sea. The train leaves from here and then enter the tunnel which links Honshū and Hokkaidou. This is the Tsugarukaikyou line. The tunnel is very long, more than a hundred kilometre, and goes very deep down. There are three stations underground. The one in the middle is at the deepest point and has some kind of museum. The carriage is both new and modern. We are shown a video explaining the construction of the tunnel, and how it descends to the deepest point and then climbs up again towards the opposite island. This tunnel is called 'Seikan', *sei* being the same as the *ao* in 'Aomori', and similarly *kan* the *hako* in 'Hakodate'. We leave the Tsugaru *hantou* (peninsula) behind.

It is raining when we arrive in Hokkaidou. At Hokodate the streets are all wet, but it is only drizzling now. From here we stop at Ōnuma which sits between two lakes, and then carry on further until we are in Ebetsu past Sapporo, the biggest city in Hokkaidou. I sleep in my sleeping-bag as usual, in the main lounge of the railway station. There is a police station nearby which never closes, you can see it from this station. You can see the light and the police in there at night, which is inviting especially when it is cold. It rains and drizzles all night and all the streets are wet. The morning of Tuesday 12th is still cloudy when I board the first train bound for Asahikawa. From here I travel to Wakkanai on a local route which is less busy because it is not a loop that connects to other places. Such a route is infinitely better than the more frequented ones. You see less people and the pace of life becomes suddenly slower. From here we pass Asahigawayojou, Shinasahikawa, and then I get off and walk about at Nagayama. I have with me the Japanese Railway's book of timetables and maps that I have borrowed from the Senzoku . It is not the current one, but everything seems to remain the same. We then pass Kitanagayama, Minamipippu, Pippu, Kitapippu, Unru, Shiokari, Wassamu, Higashirokusen, Kenbuchi, Kitasenbuchi, Shibetsu, Shimoshibetsu, Tayoru, Mizuho, Fūren, Higashifūren, before we arrive in Nayoro where I again get off and walk. From here on the

train goes pass Nisshin, Chitou, Hokusei, Chiebun, Chihoku, Minamibifuka, Bifuka, Hatsuno, Monbanai, Onnenai, Toyoshimisu, Teshiogawaonsen, Sakkuru, Otoinepu, Osashima, Saku, Teshionakagawa, Shimonakagawa, Utanai, Toikanbetsu, Nukanan, Kamionoppunai, then through a tunnel to Onoppunai, Yasuushi, Minamihoronobe, Kamihoronobe and Horonobe. The Tenshio *sanchi* (mountainous district) is to our left while that of Kitami to our right. From here on our left is the nature reserve of Sarobetsu wilderness or moor. This is the famous and romantic Sarobetsu Alpine Wildflower Refuge, to some westerners at least. We pass through Shimonuma, then Toyotomi where the train stops for a while, and then Tokumitsu, Oshikawa, Kabutonuma, Yuuchi, Bakkai, Minamiwakkanai and finally Wakkanai. The last stretch becomes rather hilly, and then between the last two stations the train suddenly swerve to the left and a breath-taking panorama of the sea comes into view on the right-hand side window of the coach. Wakkanai is on the Noshappu Cape. It is a town on the coast surrounded by low hills. Across the bay to the east of it is the of Souyami *saki* (promontory) which is the northernmost point in Hokkaido. On the east of this part of the island is the Sea of Okhotsk while on the west the Sea of Japan. One of the teachers we have in our Japanese language class at TIT is from Hokkaidou and graduated from the Sapporo University. He draws the map of Hokkaidou (Hokkaido) as a square standing on its corner. Hokkaidou is known for its Kita-kitsune (northern fox, Vulpes vulpes schrencki). *Vulpes vulpes* is the red fox or the common fox found in Asia, Europe, North Africa and North America. There are two types of these in Japan, and the other one is the Hondo fox, *Vulpes vulpes japonica.*

Because of the limited sounds available in the language, Japanese place names may sometimes provide something on which to ponder. For instance if somebody asks you where you went to and you say, 'Wakkanai', he may take it to mean that you do not know where you had been because the word can be the shortened from of 'Wakaranai!' (No idea!). And the name of the town *Utanai* already mentioned literally means 'in a song', but unless we know how it is written it can also mean 'no songs'. Well, you could perhaps say that a song is no songs is a song.

It is already dark by the time we have traced our way back to Otoineppu. The station and the car park in front it are deserted. It rains in Asahikawa tonight.

Wednesday 13 August 1997 I go to Sapporo and walk around the city for a while. From here I change train once at Chitoki and then again at Oshamanbe. It is getting dark when I reach Hakodate. I meet two girls and decide to join them on the bus up to the top of Mt Hakodate. The view of the city lights from up here is supposed to be spectacular, but

tonight there is fog everywhere and we can see little if at all. Hakodate lies towards the very southern part of the Oshima Peninsula, at the eastern nook in the Hakodate *wan* (bay). Here Japanese settlers came in the 13th century and Russian visitors in 1740. A foreign enclave was established at Motomachi here in 1854. Goryoukaku is the castle built in European style with a pentagonal plan. It was built in 1865 for the government in Edo. During 1868 – 9 loyalists of the Tokugawa shogunate fought and lost their last battle against the Meiji imperial army. This city is well-known for the Trappists who live here. Their convent on the west of the city is now famous for its cookies. These are Cistercian monks who are bound by vows of perpetual silence and austerity according to the monastery order of the same name which was founded at Cîteaux by Robert de Molesmes in 1098 as a reformed branch of the monastic order by St Benedict. The place is now Saint-Nicolas-lès-Cîteaux in Côte-d'Or. A particular example is Saint Bernard who professed it in 1113. The bus driver feels sorry for us because the weather is not good. But on our way back while we are coming down the mountain, the fog has cleared away sufficiently in one place for us to be able to see the city light, and the sight is truly beautiful. The driver stops the bus to let us look at this through our window. Five minutes later and we are off again. That was a long stop in the middle of the road, but we are happy and grateful for what he did. There are about five people on the bus, and we can sit in any place we like. I change my seat several times, always keeping close to the side away from the mountain in order to see the views.

Back in Hakodate we board the ferry, the Bēda, late that night. There is a room where we sit on a raised, low platform in the middle, having taken our shoes off first. This is infinitely better than having to sit up in a seat all night. The temperature in here is just right, though I could do with something a little warmer. There is plenty of elbow-room, and if you are tired you can simply lie down on your back and sleep. With the twilight of Thursday 14 August 1997 we reach Aomori. The dawn is beautiful. There are some clouds in the sky and it is quite cold. I have in my shorts and sandals, and so can not help shivering from time to time. Risa, Chika and I sit together on a plastic mat provided by Risa. We sit on the pier with our face towards the east, for the sun is going to come up soon. It turns out that the sun is the anticlimax. The tranquility and the lovably gentle colours soon give way to the harsh and bright light. I like it better when the sun is still under the horizon.

The Pacific Plate collides with the Asian Plate and raises the islands of Japan up from the sea, and the same is true with the islands of Okinawa. In their collision the former gradually moves down into the interior of the earth while the latter becomes creased.

On Friday 15 August I arrive in Nikkou (Nikko). I walk to the river where there is a Lion Do supermarket, and climb up the mountain in the fog. It was actually a well established hiking track. But it was quite exciting after all. The mountain was very nice there On the way down from the summit the track got so steep in quite a few places and one had to get down by sliding down while holding on to the ropes which were already there. It was drizzling the whole while too.

Along the gorge at one point there is a wide path lined with figures sculpted from rock and clad with red clothes on their head and front part of the body. The path leads me back towards the town, and before it the historical shrine. There are many big wooden structures and big, tall trees. The ground is also large. You can not help but feel yourself dwarfish with the straight, tall trees and all the structures towering above your head. Back on the street there is the gorge, river and the red bridge. 'I'll be back!', says Arnold Schwarzsnecker in Die Hard II.

Paum's Fall Semester starts on 25$^{\text{th}}$ August. She has taken a guitar course last Spring and at the end of the semester played in a recital. 'I will take her white-water rafting this weekend,' she says on 21$^{\text{st}}$ August, 'We planed to go to one of the cavern up state, and then go rafting on Hudson river'. That sounds fun. I wish I were there. 'For your fun and fight again', my brother ends his letter on the 26$^{\text{th}}$.

On 12th September 1997 , 'So I just tried in the court,' my friend says again from the Syracuse and she means it because she likes playing the tennis.

From the third week of August until the second week of September I learn *kyūdou* (Japanese archery) every weekend. Even my trip to the conference in Singapore has to be limited to a mere five days in order that I may miss no kyūdou lessons. On Sunday 31 August 1997 I board the plane at Narita to go to Singapore, arrive there the following day, and come back on Friday 5$^{\text{th}}$ September.

In kyudo one distinguishes between skilful shooting and shooting with the right mind-set. If you do it with techniques you only improve the shooting, but if you do it with spirit yourself is improved. In kyudo feeling is everything while techniques is nothing. One never envies a better archer. Success also means nothing, because there is no such thing as a perfect shot. There is always ample room for improvement. Those who are satisfied with their success tend always to repeat the same thing over and over lest they should fail. In other words they become trapped in their success. In kyudo, therefore, disappointment by failure becomes out of question. The end result means nothing, the process of learning everything. As kyudo comprises the essence of all other Japanese martial arts, this attitude permeates the whole society. An example of this

is in the field of manufacturing electrical appliances. where the new model is always different from the existing ones no matter how good the latter may already be. For a disinterested shooter the arrow may hit the target, while for a professional archer it pierces the latter. But for a philosophical archer it exists in the target. It belongs there even before it leaves your bow. The archer reflects upon himself. And since he is one with the arrow, bow and target, unconsciously his reflection also affects these three. For an ancient archer who practices *kyūjutsu* (bow techniques) it may be sufficient if the arrow pierces the target, but for someone who practices *kyūdou* (bow way) the arrow always exists in the target. But even the ancient Japanese archer also values the mind higher than he does the technique.

In Japan we believe that, 'Nana korobi, ya oki', that is to say, 'Fail seven times, eight times up you get'. You are never disheartened by failures, they are necessary. There are also sayings, 'Akirameta yo' (You are beaten!), then 'Nanisama akirameta' (Why am I beaten?), 'Akirameranu to akirameta' (If you say you shall never be beaten, then you are already beaten).

On Sunday 14 September 1997 there is a kyūdou competition, the 36^{th} sport festival of the Meguro ward. This is held at the Komazawa Olympic Park. At 8 am I meet with one of my seniors, and together we go to the place. First there is a parade, and then we walk in a line to the shooting ground. I do badly in the individual category, ranking over 30^{th}. No one wants to team up with me in the team category. Everyone wants to do well, and to win, even in kyūdou where winning is by no mean the aim, neither is the high score in general. So, you see, I am doing all right really even though I may have finished nearly last, because I understand kyūdou. As long as you carry out the motion correctly and naturally, and become one with your bow and arrow, then no results matter. In the end someone comes and seeks me out, in fact two do because we are in the same shoes. Hiroshi, Jirou and I become the team which has the least hope of ever winning, and I have the honour of being the leader of the team. What I do as a leader, however, is only to walk in front of everybody, which is two in this case. I set the pace, and everyone follows. The leader sees no one behind him while everyone looks at him all the time. In kyūdou, where the only important thing is to let go of the need to win and simply let your subconscious mind do all the action as it has been trained, nothing else can be that important. But still the leader can set the mind of his teammates on the right track by showing his determination and defiance of all expectations. My first arrow goes astray, and all from the other two behind me follow suit. When the second round comes I slowly take a deep breath. Nothing

matters to me now. I shall become one with my bow and arrow, and that shall suffice. Let them have all the trophies in the world. With this attitude in my mind, my eyes become off-focused and I feel myself one not only with the bow and arrow but also with the target. I judge my position and then simply let one action lead to another. Let your subconscious mind learn and adjust itself. It is better than all the time criticising and instructing it. The arrow I let go hits the bull's-eye. I do not even have to look, I know it by the sound. The other two people in my team also hit the bull's-eye, and they carry on hitting it every time hereafter even though I have already got my only hit of the day. We came second, which amazes everyone myself included.

Paum says on 22^{nd} September 1997 that she has a closed-book examination coming up on Thursday. The week before last she went to LA. Her supervisor has given her a new computer to be proud of. It is a fully-loaded notebook, a Toshiba, Pentium 100, with 4 GB of hard-disk space. Only a year ago the best PCs were still KBs and the GB something unheard-of. Paum is very good at tennis, and she plays for the Syracuse University. In Thailand my parents and sister have just returned from Bhụket where they stayed in a room which looks on to the beach.

October, the present government of Thailand is said to be corrupted. Nhan is buying a house in Jiangmhăi by instalment. I do not understand why she buys it, since she works in Songkhlạ which is nearly two thousand kilometres away on land. Paum does not like swimming that much, but she can swim. She plans to go to Alaska, San Antonio and New Orleans. 'In Hawaii,' she says, 'more people speak Japanese than English'. Her *English* probably means *American.*

Ellen is back from Vienna. She graduated from Cambridge, then went to Paris and then to San Francisco with her sister. There they stayed for two months. She loves both the diverse cultures of the place and the coast along the Pacific Ocean.

I have heard some news about air-pollution in Singapore, so I ask Gee Wah. But he replies on 7^{th} October that the haze there is not so bad, for it is still possible to breathe normally. Through her work Mọ has been to Lạw and she likes it there. My father buys a new car around 10^{th} October. Hearing about this I think to myself, 'Hell, no!' This, together with his insisting earlier that I bring my friend Megumi home with me, seems to confirm my fear that he thinks that I wanted to marry her. I try my best to satisfy all the parties, so I entertain my friend by showing her around Thailand. But no one understands that the marital love is no substitute for a Christian compassion. Then it becomes impossible to make yourself clear without saying bad things about your friend. And

in doing this I degrade and demoralise myself. One should never have been driven this far. Let your 'No' be no, and your 'Yes', yes.

Saturday 1st November 1997 is the Fall Conference of the Thai students in Japan.

I have accumulated mileage enough on the Thai Airway card, so from 5th to 19th November 1997 I go to Hawaii. From Honolulu in Oahu I go to Hawaii, Maui, and then back to Oahu again. At the library in the University of Hawaii I find and read for the first time the works by Don Marquis in the series written by Archy the cockroach.

Having slept on the map desk in front of the information centre last night, I explore the craters, 11 November 1997. The Kilauea Iki Crater has a long, grey line cut across its diameter. This is no natural line but the Kilauea Iki Trail. I walk to the Thurstor lava tube first. Around here is lush rainforest. Then I walk across the floor of the Kilauea Iki Crater, where there are cracks and sulphurous gases steam up everywhere. The floors are giant crusts, lifted up by the pressure of the steam from underneath them. They are all rocks and porous, some large pores while the others with smaller ones. There are plants growing even though the floors are entirely made of rocks. Somer parts of the shrubs fade away, probably due to a new vent of the sulphurous gases. I have my socks on, and under these sandals. Some people look at my feet and laugh. You are supposed to wear heavy boots or strong foot gear here, but I have none with me. The path takes me to the Byron hedge trail. Around here rocks fold up in creases like laval flows frozen in the course of their action. Some of the lava bubbles crumble down, showing their ferric red interior inside which I can stand upright and still have some headroom to spare.

The Halema's main crater is huge. One may walk to its very edge where the crust underneath is cracked around on all sides, leaving it to rest on the ground and stay there only by its own weight. The crater resembles an open-pit mine. Its walls all around have two distinct layers, which makes it look like the road for trucks to move down to the mine below.

In November Mọ moves into a new condominium while Ellen has failed her driving test again. By January 1998 the Thai economy has been suffering from the financial crisis of the preceding year when the Thai bạd was attacked by a hedge-fund in the US, and consequently devalued. Now all the Non-Performing Loans, both real and imaginary, crops up like mushrooms. In Ohio this winter has been mild compared to a few years ago.

On 24th December 1997 we have a Christmas Party together at home, that is Haramachi 2, Meguro. Megumi has made the cake herself, and has

also brought a bottle of wine and the Christmas tree. Later on tonight we go to look at the illumination at Harajuku and Shibuya. It is a cold night. The illumination has been set up by Caster on the Omotesan *dou* (street)

There is a New Year party at the Ḅàn Daiy Restaurant at the Futako-tamagawa Fun Park on 31^{st} December 1997 . I perform the *blaung fai* (fire sticks). I have had some fever for a few days, and is now sweating. But after the performance I feel better. It is strange but true, the act of *goang blaung* always take fevers away. I have noticed this since no less than ten years ago. Half way through the performance, Ḥia, as I call the owner of the restaurant and my former boss, asks me to go perform the rest of the thing outside. I duly comply to his request. It is what I wanted anyway, but I could not possibly have moved all the people outside where it is shiveringly cold. This is no modern building but a traditional Thai one, with the low-ceilinged ground floor where it is only meant to be used as a storage space or the ground to raise the chicken or, for that matter, pigs. I hardly have the extra overhead space needed for some of the move, for instance the *Nạrạyṇa sĭ kaur* (four-handed Nārāyaṇa) which is my favourite. The doors are opened and people gather behind it to look at me who stand outside performing. I had finished the one-handed parts and now so now it is the two-handed ones I am doing. Some come outside despite the cold. The torch-blaungs in my hands seem to enjoy the air in the open, for they burn evermore brightly no matter how hard I try to spin them off. I am by no means the fastest amongst the spinners of blaung. Moreover I know that it is not the speed but the acceleration in the spinning that turns the lit torch part of the thing off as surely as if it were electrically powered and you switch it off. However, I have neither acceleration nor speed, and perhaps because of the abundance of the oxygen in the air the fire on the blaungs in my hands not only never waver but splutter happily ever brighter. In the end my pride lets up, and for fear that I might let them accidentally go I stop and without shame place them on the floor and try to roll them off. Not even this, but the bucket of water someone has thoughtfully fetched it is that does the job the blaung master could not do.

It is again the time for the Seishun-18 tickets. My life is nothing but swimming, the Seishun-18 tickets, and the piano. In a way I am already lucky that there should be three of them instead of two, because they can now form circular combinations instead of the otherwise mundane toggling back and forth. This time Megumi takes me to Shikoku, that fourth one and the least known of the four big islands of Japan. On 4^{th} January we go to Nikko during the day where we walk along the

Chūzenji *ko* (lake) . At the corner of the lake closest to us a creek becomes the Kegon Fall before it goes into the lake. The Nantai *san* (mountain) is so close by that there are no flat grounds between the foot of its cone and the road along the lake. It seems that from behind the shops that line this street we climb straight up the mountain. No mountains could be as boring to climb as this, with its monotonous conic shape and its lacks of trees, except perhaps the Mt Fuji. At night we take the *Moonlight*, that JR train which never stops. In the morning of 5th January we have a quick look at the Himeji *jou* (castle), and then we need to go back to the Okayama Station. We reach Shikoku in no time, and cross over on the Seto *ōhashi* (big bridge). Opened in April 1988, it is approximately 12 km long. To reach this bridge on the train you go first to Okayama. But the bridge is so enticing that we get off at the last JR station, in Kojima, and then take a bus across instead. We get off the bus midway on the bridge where there is the Fisher Park. We wait for the transfer bus, but in the end when it doth come we need to buy another ticket anyway, for we have stopped here too long. The park, however, gives good views. There are a pier and an entertainment ship. Tonight we stay at the YHA in Takamatsu. On the 6th we look at the Whirlpool in the sea inside the channel. From Takamatsu we take the Koutoku line to Tokushima, and have to wait for a train at Sampon Matsu. The Yoshino River enters the sea between Naruto and Tokushima. The Naruto *uzushio* (eddy current) takes place periodically according to the *shio* (tides). The narrow Naruto Strait lets the water flow freely during the high tide, but with the flow ebbing during the low tide eddies are formed. The Youth Hostel at Awa Ikeda where we stay tonight is most commendable. We have made a reservation and since we know that we are going to arrive late at night, the owner of the place kindly picks us up at the Awa Ikeda Station. From the station it is 5.5 kilometres to the YH. We cross over the Yoshino River and then climb uphill along a winding, rather steep road. This is in the mid of winter when there are few people travelling, so we are given the best and most spacious room. The place is on the mountain bordering a *kenritsu shizen kouen* (prefectural nature-park) where the sounds of the *hototogisu* (little cuckoo, Cuculus poliocephalus) and the *uguisu* (Japanese bush warbler, *fam.* Sylviidae) are common. The following day, since we are leaving very early in the morning, we are given a lift again to the station. Today, 7th January, we visit the Koraku *en* (garden). We go as far as to Kanazawa and stay at the YH there. On the 8th we take a night train back to Tokyo. In the morning of the 9th the train stop with no proper reasons at Kitamoto in Saitama, and we are delayed for two hours. We arrive at Ikebukuro instead of Shinjuku. The delay is caused by the snow that has

just fallen on the city. Cities in Hokkaido, for instance Sapporo, have all their train tracks equipped with heating facility to melt away the snow. And they have the snow half of the time but the trains never stop. On the other hand, here in Tokyo where it seldom snows, the trains grind to a stop each time there is as much a thimbleful of snow as this.

On 17 and 18 January Megumi and I go to Yamanashi and stay at her place there. It is such a great place in which her grandfather used to live. He is no more now. Along our way there we stop to visit his grave, and here we pray. The cemetery is a good walk up the hill. Everywhere is covered with snow, especially on the hill where we have to wade through thick snow. Here I find out to my dismay that when you have given up smoking you never could find a lighter to light the candles.

By 7^{th} February 1998 I am recovering from a cold and plan to move into the new place at 1-22-35 Himonya in the Meguro Ward next month. It is nice and well-lit with windows facing both east and south, which would have been ideal for me. The place is very quiet. It is surrounded by a Catholic church and a Japanese temple, and from the window of my room one can see a Japanese graveyard. It is about 15 minutes on foot from where I live now. It turns out that I shall never move into this place. It would have been difficult for Megumi to come to see me here, as it seems that we need to inform the landlord every time she does.

Prince says on 19^{th} February 1998 that there have been some forecasts of the snow in England, but without any luck so far.

'This middle of March, we plan to go to the beach nearby', says one of my sisters on the 23^{th}. She reminds me of the *Middlemarch* (1871 – 72) by George Eliot (née Mary Ann Evans, 1819 – 1880). I promise myself I shall really read it through to the end this time.

The friend in the US went skiing on Saturday 21^{st} It was quite warm and so parts of the mountain became icy. She fell down must have been twenty times. 'This mountain in lake placid used to be an Olympic site in 1980', was her concluding remark. I wonder what, if any, *scare* and *sacred* have in common. But the latter was the past participle of *sacre* whereas the former is similar to the Icelandic *skjarr* (apt to flee) and *skirra* (drive away), so both seem to be different from each other enough.

The TIT branch of the IEEE organises a trip to All Nippon Airways on 26 February 1998. We meet at the Haneda Station near the exit from the Tokyo Monorail. The inside of the garage where the Boeing's are maintained looks like nothing earthly. You feel as though you are inside a future colonial spaceship in some scientific fictions. We look at the flight simulators which are used for training the pilots how to fly the plane, take off and touch down. It is a small room with screens simulating the

view that you would see from the windscreens of the real aircrafts. To us it is like an expensive computer game. But to the pilot trainee it must be more than that, perhaps more of a limbo than mere entertainment, for they know that after this they will be flying the real thing which will look and feel exactly the same to all intents and purposes.

On 27 February I go to the Nippori Station and then to a concert hall to watch Megumi play the piano. The following day I move into the new place. And then on Sunday 1st March there is a concert at Komaba.

In March 1998 I move into a new place and my address is now 1 – 10 - 2 Minami, Meguro Ku, Toukyou 152 – 0013. I discover my new identity. I know now that am a Thai whose ethnic origin can be simply described as Chino-Siamese-Lanna. I was born in November 1966 in Chiangmai, Thailand. Before this I always thought that Lāṇṇạ which is my mother tongue was nothing but a corrupted Thai. We use different words, and even those words that sounds similar are never exactly pronounced the same. It was impossible to write Lāṇṇạ with the Thai alphabet. But now I know that this is only because the Thai government in the past suppressed the teaching of the Lāṇṇạ alphabets for fearing that the people of that culture would want to form another country instead of being with Siam, which of course is nonsense. The Lanna, in other words the Lannaese, are no arrogant people who had never been ruled over by another culture. The land had been under the Burmese for more than 200 years, so we know humiliation well. Myself I never believe in countries. It is very difficult to define yourself in terms of only one country. For example, I am a Thai since I was born in Thailand. But my great-grandmother was from Ȧyudhȧyạ, so I could call myself a Siamese. She was still alive when I was born. But my first language is Lāṇṇạ which belongs to a culture that is older than Sukhọday let alone Ȧyudhȧyạ, Siam or for that matter Thailand. Shall I be a Lanna then? Then my grand father emigrated from China, and he did give me a Chinese name of Zhāng Míng Lóng, so you could possibly call me a Chinese. As though this is no complications enough I do have a dad and a mum who are both New Zealanders, and I still identify myself as a Kiwi since I studied and graduated from a high school there which implies that I was *made* in New Zealand. Teachers are very essential to the Thai culture. So I could say that I am a Kiwi because I was made in New Zealand, and likewise a British because I have studied there too. Through Kyūdou I have learnt the Japanese culture at its roots and thus I was made in Japan and therefore a Japanese too. One of my Kyūdou gave me the name 'Kippu', meaning *spirit* where *ki* is the air and *pu* is the *fu* or the wind. This word is only used for someone who was born in Tokyo, especially in the saying, 'Edokko, kippu ga ī!', that is *Edokkites*

are good in the spirit, Edokko or Edokkites being the people who are born in Edo, that is Tokyo. So my teacher in the Japanese archery has accepted me as a Japanese by calling me Kippu instead of Kit, and what other people may say become irrelevant as a consequence.

All countries are made by God provided that there is a god. Both Christianity and Islam say that if there is a god then there is only one. In other words, there can be one and only one god so we may talk about the God in a capital letter. This is by no means equivalent to saying that there must necessarily be a god, because it only implies to all intents and purposes that if there is to be a god there can be only one. There are only two possibility for the Cosmos, namely stationary or non-stationary. The last one has a singularity, the Big Bang, as the point of creation and therefore it is obvious in this case that there is a God. But even the other remaining possibility, the stationary Universe, could still have a god, even though it is more difficult to imagine in this case. Because saying that the universe may be non-stationary is not equivalent to saying that no gods exist, a religious cosmologist should never despise those advocates of a stationary universe.

During the summer holiday of my fourth year at the Chulalongkorn University I went to work in Hungary. That was in 1990. Hungary had just turned into a democratic country one year. I went there with an international student organisation called AIESEC, which stands for Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales. I applied with the Ramkamhaeng University AIESEC in 1987 because I wanted to do my Engineering Training abroad. The training was required by my department at the university. But I went to work in Surrey during the summer vacation of 1989 for that training instead. I did not feel like going to Budapest then since Hungary was still a communist country. Back then the iron curtain was still there and no one knows what was going on on the other side.

I try to teach myself Hungarian geography because I have no memorabilia left from the time when I lived there. I was robbed of all my belongings in Warsaw before I returned home after having lived in Budapest a few months.

Budapest is a combination of three different towns, Buda, Pest and Old Buda. Buda and Pest are divided by the river Danube. The first one is hilly with lots of woods, while the latter residential area and boring. Old Buda was an old Roman city. I remember going to the Hungarian National Museum where the crown of St. István was kept. The crown was decorated with a cross on top. But the cross tilted to one side.

When AIESEC had an orienteering we went to the Margitsziget which was an island in the Danube. There was a pedestrian bridge breaking

off from a bridge for traffic which went over the river. The island was $2,000 \times 500$ metres in size. It had among other things a swimming pool. From what I remember the pool was odd-looking shape and very long. From one end of the pool we could walk across a lawn to another pool which was smaller but deeper. There was a spring board on this smaller one.

We went to the Castle District on the Buda side of the Danube which had been listed in a heritage list of UNESCO since 1988. In 1686 there was a fire which had destroyed a great part of the castle. There was a church called Mátyás church which had its roofs in majolica style. There was also the Royal Palace which was destroyed by fire in 1945, and which housed the Hungarian National Gallery and the Museum of Contemporary History.

I went with my flat mates to take a bath at the Király Baths. It had a very beautiful interior with pillars and marbles. The sulfurous bath inside was very warm and murky. I thought that it was hot and had to get off often for fear that I would faint in it.

I remember going to operas at the opera house many times. There were Tanhäuser, La Traviata, etc. The tickets were very cheap, and you could just walk in if you went there sometime after the performance had already started and choose any box you'd like to sit in.

We went to a cathedral to hear the Dalai Lama talked. His English was very good. I did not know then that he was an American. I thought that it was only because he had lived in America for sometimes which made his English so good. So I somewhat admired him. When the talk was over we stood at the front door waiting for him to come out. We nearly rubbed shoulders with him just before he went into a huge black car.

We went together in three to the cathedral, me, Rob and his friend. Rob showed me a puzzle his friend made from something he saw while in Japan. It was a paper forming a tiled band. I was asked if I could turn its inside out. His friend gave me the puzzle he made. I solved it about three days afterwards and virtually showed it to everyone I knew. To be precise, I gave away may copies of it which I had made myself, even before I could solve it. It was such a nice puzzle and I wanted to share it with all. I think that the way I solved it was the simplest and thus the best. A year afterwards one friend of mine at the Mining Engineering Department to whom I was a senior did solve it in another way. His way was more complicated than mine, but still it was a nice way. The key idea which made these two solutions beautiful was that of the symmetry point reached when mid-way from one side to another.

Szentendre is a small town 20 kilometres to the north of Budapest. It

is mainly a tourist town. I had been there more than ten times already. Hévíz is a small town south-west of the Balaton Lake and less than 10 kilometres away from it. There was a thermal lake there, 4.4 hectares in size. A large structure was built over it, standing just above the water. Inside there are lounges and changing rooms. I went there with a group of students from AIESEC in a bus. It was one of the study tours. I remember it was nice and windy when we arrived, but later on when we were swimming in the pool it became sunny and warm.

We made a round trip when my flat mate from Germany and I went around the country together in his car. The trip was very nice. We had some memorable experiences. Once I remember we drove into a town just before midnight. We stopped by the road side and was taking out and preparing some food when we heard some noises of some drunken people in a distance. Not long afterward one guy walking towards our car, stopped and begged at my half-opened door for money. I said we don't have any, which was true since we were on budget. Or should I say that I was on budget and my friend did the same because I was reluctant to have him pay more than I did. The drunken man did not go away and started to talk louder. I think he hold the door of the car so I was not able to close it and drive away. That's why I got of the car, saying nothing but with a long bread knife in one hand ready for trouble. The guy left immediately. He was not drunk after all.

After that there was still loud noises here and there on the street. We thought that it was probably the time pubs and restaurants closed. We agreed not to stay a minute longer, but to pack our food and go. We drove out of the town not knowing where we should go. Our previous plan was to stop our car close to a police station or a park in town where there was some street light, and sleep the night inside the car. But now we thought we knew better. The city and people were not better than, or as good as nature. From a deserted and unlit road we turned off onto a small lane, went along some fifty meters and stopped our car.

After there was neither the sound of the engine nor the headlights of cars, we started to hear the nature around us. I think we ate and talked. And then I washed my teeth and said good night. Behind us and not very far away there were poplars standing in a row. I can still hear the sound of them rustling in the wind. It was very nice. All above us were millions of star. I could see them just looking out of the window to my left or through the windscreen in front of me. I kept my glasses on for a while, wanting to look at the stars a little bit more. But even when I did take them off, just the sound of poplar leaves rustling in the wind in a spring night was already something.

When we woke up in the morning we found that the road we were on

actually led to a lake close by. Not far away there were already one or two people at the lake, one was in it swimming. We breakfasted, swam in the lake when the sun had risen a bit higher and then off we went on our way.

We drove across the plain. We went either to Debrecen or to Miskolc, or both. On the way from there back to Budapest we passed through a great plain. Sometimes the road did rise up, came down or made a large curve a little bit, but more often at a long stretch there was just flatness everywhere. The grass made waves with the wind. It was a hot day. The trip across the plain was also very memorable, as well as a change.

Before I live in Tokyo I used to live in Manchester. It was a town when I saw it for the time in 1994. I was there doing my master degree until 1995. When I returned there to do a PhD it had become a city.

Manchester's contemporary history can be divided into two period, one before *the bomb* and the other one after. The bomb was that by IRA in June 1996 which did not kill anyone. The media proudly claimed that the reason for this was that the police miraculously managed to evacuate the 80,000 people from the Arndale Shopping Centre area in time. I agreed this could be true, but could not help suspecting that it was the intention of the IRA as well. I never side with them, no reason why I should, but I think in this case at least this seems to be the case. This could be because there was a strong Irish community in this city. Every year in March we have an Irish Festival to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Until that bomb Manchester was in a similar situation to Ireland in the 19^{th} century. It was being neglected by the government. The city which had become so great and powerful between 1870 and 1930 had shrunken. Spots where it had retreated from had become back streets both dark and evil, ruled solely by crimes. Even Rusholme, Stockport and Sale had become isolated from the city centre, let alone places as far away from it as Altrincham and Bolton. In those days Manchester and the Greater Manchester had become as far apart as possible in many senses. The former one represented mediocrity and the latter one outlandishness. I remembered every one of my student friends said that it was a miserable and dangerous city. Everyone thought that he had made a wrong choice.

In those days no streets here was safe. Oxford Road was deserted and mucking was not uncommon. If you went along it outward towards Wilmslow Road it became unthinkable to be walking on one's own. The Roman remains in Castle Field was nowhere to be seen. None of us has been to it nor even heard anything about it. One was never safe, not even in places where it was bustling with people. There was only one such place and it was the ugly Arndale Centre where the bomb went off.

Once while walking the Market Street I heard a woman yelled and there was a lean tall man with a woman's handbag in one hand running. The funny thing was he kept running around and around, criss-crossing the crowded path but never ran away. No wonder he finally went down by one gentleman who casually sticked out one foot of his. The previous man was then taken away either by two policemen or by two security guards I could not remember. He was near crying, seemingly rather from being upset than from having hurt himself in his fall. Two things came across my mind then. The first one was that it did not become a man to cry, especially one his height and who professed to be a thief. The second one was that crime was so common no one seemed to take any notice of the second man and none seemed thankful to what he had done.

Ireland used to have a similar experience. During the Great Famine in 1845–47 a million people died. Many fled to America, bringing with them the resonance sound in their Irish accent to become one of the distinguished characteristics of American accent. Though it was true that *Phythophthora infestans* was the cause of disastrous potato output level, many people still felt that the British government could have done more to help the starving people. Many felt infuriated as a result. The memory etched deep in the minds of Irish and was the cause of the formation of the IRA.

The reason for the downturn of Manchester to a verge of ruin can be put to change in technology as well as change in government. During the industrial revolution the city was in a strategic position. It was close enough to a port. A ship canal has been built to bring ships up to its doorsteps. It was situated in the middle of the country, and thus suitable as a railway junction. Both resources and goods went by train. Coal, which was the main source of energy then, was also shipped by trains and Manchester was not far from its source. Technology has changed and coal has been mostly replaced at the same time as being gradually phased out due to an environmental issue. This could explain why a city had reduced into a town and was falling into ruin.

As usually was the case, government also had a part to play. The city had a history strongly linked to labour movement. So it is not unreasonable to expected it to prosper when Labour is in power, and falling out of favour or even sneered at when Conservative does.

I used to think I preferred Conservatives. But having seen how UK's economic has improved after the Labour took charge and how the country has stopped sneering at or ignoring its neighbour European countries, I has changed my mind. Under the Conservatives, the Home Office used to be more hostile to foreigners as well. When I worked in a Thai restaurant south of China Town in 1995, they used to storm us once and sent

an old lady who was very kind to me away. In other words, with Conservatives in power they treated us like pigs. The anti-racism then was a shallow show or was a governing game, and the government was doing nothing but a games-show. I have heard they even sent a president of the Student Union of one university away for good because they thought he was not supposed to work or to hold a position. It did not make any sense to them that he was a volunteer and did not get any money out of it. In other words they were Hell Office proper because no one who boils a gentle guest in his own house will be able to call it a home, let alone be able to feel cool inside himself. Some ignoramus within the Conservatives still told the media recently that they would give the Labours back their own country when they come into power. I think it is more likely they would put Britain into a second Dark Age. They do not know how to love their neighbours and everything they stand for in democracy is hollower than one would imagine possible. In February 2001 I was in London with other student volunteers to meet the Deputy Home Office Secretary Mr Boateng. He seemed nice. More than that, considering the image of the Home Office that his opposition party endeavours he seemed humane. The only thing his predecessor ever did was wreaking havoc and bullying. Claire said in 1995 that she was not happy with what the Conservatives was doing with the country, so she looked forward to a Labour government. I did not agree with her though I did not say anything. I could never agree with her more now. Sometimes I felt sorry for the former government and thought that perhaps they were a misunderstood monster like the Rolling Stone in the past who had got to maintain a public image of bad guys. But then I thought, 'But this is absurd'. I think that in the end handsome is what handsome does or beauty is what beauty does, what ever.

Where is the moon tonight?

The rain has just stopped
there is no moon tonight
the air is so still
all is quiet

Lovers passed me by
they are whispering to
each other's ears.

Who are they ?
From where did they come?
...whither did thou go?

The rain has just stopped,
it reminds me of you.

Why is there no moon tonight?

Racism in UK seems to be a very serious issue indeed. Not that I think it is. In fact, I think that it is not that big an issue here when compared with elsewhere. However it is considered close to being a crime to be considered a racist. I have a feeling that often it is not your race that people mind but the way you talk. Is it not true that a black American talks differently from a white one. Mr Aziz of the Gild company said that every one was a racist. I disagreed with him, saying that I was not. For me to dislike someone is normal, even good. But to have a prejudice, to group people together and then generalise your prejudice on each group, that's racism. I think that independence, solitude and inter-cultural communication helps eradicate this kind of thing.

Having done a sixth form English in New Zealand and never had any problem living in English speaking environment, I must admit that I had little experience of racism. Similar to the first time that I came to the UK when nobody that I knew followed football which kept me wondering who did watch it and how come it did get popular in the UK, most people that I knew seemed not to be a racist that I could not help wondering sometimes who was. But then again there were these cases. You knew what it was when you came across one.

The company called Gild that I mentioned earlier did catering. They recruited people and students to work in a bar selling food and drink at football clubs, or at hotels when there was a party. I went there because Kai told me that they wanted people to work on New Year's Eve for double pay. I wanted to cook so I applied for a job as a chef, but was told that there was nothing for me. When I said that I was not interested in a waiting job, they said that was fine and that they wanted me to come to a training. 'But', one of them said without any relevance to what we had been talking about at all, 'You've got to be honest with us and tell us exactly what day you can work'. I thought to myself afterwards, 'Did he think I was a fool who could not understand English well enough to know that I was being taken for a fool?' He would have seemed to be an imbecile himself if he said the same thing to a British. Well...Was racism excluded? I thought they were talking about cooking training so I said I would be glad to come. After a while I decided to ask them again what the training was for, and was told that it was for being a waiter. Then I said that I did not want to be a waiter, I had waited all my life. So I took my application form and went away without a word.

Another incident, also with Gild, was when we were assigned the Liverpool Football Club at Anfield on the New Year Day. We went to Liverpool from Manchester with a minibus. Everyone was supposed to have a job to do. But in the end only half of us did, and that half

comprised of all the British and all the blacks. The other half of course was all Asians. The young lady from Gild who took us there was called Jessica. She was black. Was racism excluded?

From what she said our English was not good. Unfortunately that implied mine as well, and since as I have already told you I had my 6th-Form English from New Zealand which I endeared so much, I would very much doubt her conjecture. I would really like to compete with her in the matter of English. I was tragic, if you know what I mean. And by that I mean I was serious. I have not studied Macbeth for nothing. It might be that she hated us because she had overheard one Chinese whose name was Mike said that there were a lot of Negroes. I knew Mike. He was one of my fourteen flat mates. What I did not know was whether he knew that *Negro* is a derogatory word. If this was the case, then whether he did know or not it could not be a reason enough for my having to be out of job for what he said. I was always polite. I did not say a word untrue to English propriety. Then provided that racism was excluded, I should have been able to work on that day both at Anfield and at the Manchester United Football Club later on that night. I should have been able to earn no less than eighty pounds.

I always went to the Manchester Public Library. I borrowed many books, mostly either on languages and piano music. I made sure not to overdue a book because I did not want to have to pay the charge. Once I had all the books I borrowed renewed at the counter. That made me much at ease for I knew I would not be surprisedly fined. During the Christmas and New Year holiday I asked again when the next due date for the books I had borrowed would be, and was told that the next one was due 28th January. On 3rd January I decided to start returning books, so I took seven books to the library. I was told that I was going to be fined forty pence because two of the books were overdue. Susan, a lady at the counter, said that I should have obtained a printout of the new due date when I had the books renewed. She thought that I was lying. If there were printouts then why was I not given one? Why was I misled in the matter of dates when I asked about the next time I need to return a book? Again one could ask oneself, 'Is racism excluded?'

Independence and solitude are two important ingredients for not being a racist. They are not easy things to do. You need to have courage, knowledge and readiness to protect yourself. To put it plainly, it is by far an easier thing to do to stay within a group. You readily have a license for everything. When your group became a mob, it turned a hideous creature. It did everything, you had done nothing. So it is safer to stay within a group, even though you betray your soul in the process.

In my childhood years I was a Buddhist. Between the age of 17 and 20 I

called myself non-religion, only because I thought that it was not possible to believe in more than one religion. Now I call myself a Christian at times because I do believe in God. But then again, I also believe in Buddhism as a wisdom or a philosophy. For me Buddhism is not a religion but a philosophy. It did not start from myths, as would have to be the case if it were to be called a religion. Any myth that has been put in after philosophy is therefore out of place and irrelevant, only to serve the purposes of some irrelevant individuals. So I believe in at least one religion and one philosophy, respectively Christianity and Buddhism.

My nationality is Thai but I don't even feel that I am a Thai. Not only because I was born there that I should feel I belong there. Now I say that my mother tongue is Lanna. I used to say it was Thai. After having become interested in languages I now know that the two are different, though closely related, languages. Thai military governments tried to have only one language for the country. They discouraged the use of Lanna scripts. It was not to be taught in schools, not even to be mentioned in text books. Help reviving the Lanna language proper, script and all, is one of my ambitions. But I don't feel myself a Lanna. Though I had a grandmother who came from Ayudhya and through my Sri Ayudhya Sword School I am deeply related to the Thai culture as passed down from the time when the nostalgic city of Ayudhya ruled the area, I don't feel myself a Thai. Though both of my grandfathers came from China and I like the Chinese language, I don't feel myself a Chinese. I could have felt myself a New Zealander, a Japanese or a British. Having the nationality is not a prerequisite for feeling the sense of belonging. Or would I rather say that I feel I belong everywhere above?

Manchester has changed from being a sorry shrunken skeleton of a city I used to know in 1995 into the pride of a region. This, I think, was the result of a bomb by IRA at the Arndale Centre in 1996. The plan of the city seemed to be the opposite of that of London. Instead of East End we have Moss Side to the west. The China and Ethnic town is to the south, not to the north. Both river Medlock and river Mersey flew westward instead of eastward as was the case with the Thames.

I used to like Conservatives, but now I preferred Labours. Manchester, as well as British economics as a whole, owed much to the Labour government. The country now became more international instead of isolated. Like fat cells which never go away, Manchester has grown again to fill its former self with amazing speed. I once bought a Megarider ticket and went around the city on Stagecoaches Manchester for a week. The expanse of Greater Manchester and the distribution of houses was stunning.

The first time I went to London was in the Spring of 1989 when I did Engineer Training at the John Dallimore and Partners in Walton-on-Thames and lived in Weybridge. I flew with Air Lanka to Heathrow with a transit in Colombo. Bill, who was going to be my boss, was there at the airport with his Ford Scorpio. When I stepped from the custom section into arrival area he was there right in front of me with the warmest welcome. We went on M25 heading for St. Albans where his home was. There I met Met who was a sister of Ben who introduced me to his brother-in-law Bill.

Bill was a fast driver. Sometimes when I stayed over in St. Albans and came with him to the office in the morning he would drive well over hundred miles per hour. He said once he was travelling at 160 mph turning a bend and saw the behind of a car in front of his caught in a traffic jam and nearly could not make it braking.

In 43 AD the Romans crossed the Thames close to the site of London Bridge. Thirteen years later it was badly damaged by the fighting between the force of Queen Boadicea and the Romans. In 836 it was invaded by Vikings. In 1052 Westminster Abbey was built in Thorney Island on the site previously a Benedictine Abbey. In 1066 the city was besieged during the Norman Conquest and William I became king. The population of the city was approximately 15,000. William II was crowned in 1087, Henry I in early 12^{th} century, Henry II 1154, King John 1199, Henry III 1216, Edward I 1272, Edward II 1307, Edward III 1327, Richard II 1377, Henry IV 1399, Henry V 1413, Henry VI 1422, Edward V 1483 and then replaced by Richard III the same year, Henry VII 1485 and Tudor period began, Henry VIII 1509, Queen Elizabeth I 1558, Charles I 1625, James II 1685, George I 1714 beginning the House of Hanover, George II 1727, George III 1760, George IV 1820, William IV 1830, Queen Victoria 1837, Edward VII 1910 beginning the House of Saxe-Coburg, George V 1910 beginning the House of Windsor, Edward VIII 1936 and replaced by George VI the same year. In 1348 the Black Death reduced the population of the city by half to 30,000. In 1665 the Great Plague killed 100,000 people. The Great Fire destroyed the medieval city in 1666. In 1675 Christopher Wren began the construction of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Greenwich Observatory was built to mark meridian. In 1711 the Academy of Art opened. In 1759 the British Museum was opened. The first canal from River Lea to Thames was completed in 1770. In 1785 *The Times* newspaper began. In 1803 Surrey Canal was completed from Peckham to docks. Construction of the National was begun in 1832. In 1851 the Great Exhibition was held in the Crystal Palace within Hyde Park. Construction of the Tate Gallery began in 1893. In 1933 the London Transport began to operate.

In 1939 the population of the city reached its peak of 8,615,050. Queen Elizabeth II was crowned in 1952. In 1976 the Museum of London was opened. London Dockland Development Corporation started working in 1981. The Gatwick North Terminal was opened in 1988.

Bill took me to visit many interesting places. We went to a pumping station for preventing flood from the Thames, to the Dartford Tunnel where we went inside a huge ventilation duct where very strong wind blew and to the Gatwick Airport to have a look at the electrical installation.

In early 1995 during my study at UMIST just when my money ran out I found myself a job just because I had learnt the art of old Thai weaponry from the Sri Ayudhya Sword School. I performed more than ten times around Manchester for a Muay Thai organisation. I performed before matches as well as in a Thai restaurant owned by the owner of the organisation.

On 17^{th} February 2001 I went to visit Bill and Met in St. Albans and stayed the night at their place. The next day I was in London visiting the British Museum and stayed at the Tower Inn in Westminster, a five minutes' walk to the Houses of Parliament where I was to join other representatives of Community Action from all over the country. On Monday 19^{th} we met next to a statue beside the Westminster Abbey, which was on the opposite side of Abingdon Street to the Houses of Parliament. There we had photos taken together and then with Mr. Boateng the Home Office Minister when he arrived. Mr. Paul Boateng was the Deputy Home Secretary. Shortly after he arrived he asked where the cheque was and I said, 'It's gone' and then quickly added 'somewhere'. He shook hands with us all around our photographer could hardly have time to point camera at the right place. I was too busy trying to place myself in a right place for him that I missed shaking hands with our minister. The *mock* cheque of 8.4 million pounds was a huge one. Together with a banner it was meant for photographs which in turn was for publicity. We then went in through St. Stephen Entrance to a meeting inside one of the Committee Rooms.

That afternoon I bought a day ticket of Zone 1 and 2 and went around London. I went to the Camden Lock Market in the Camden Town where there were many small stalls selling various things from lamps to devil's stick to clothes to Yaki Soba. I walked to the Docklands (Isle of Dogs) from Greenwich via a foot tunnel under the river Thames, and after that went to and walked around Canary Wharf. Train that runs there was called the Docklands Light Railway. This was similar to the Yurikamome line in Tokyo which traverses the Tokyo Kaikan, the development on old garbage landfill sites in Tokyo Bay. The atmosphere was also a similar one with exclusively brand new things.

Westminster is at the heart of politics in Britain. The Number 10 Downing Street is here as well as the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey where kings and queens are crowned. The development of Canary Wharf was done by Canadian developers Olympia and York. Phase one was completed in 1991 and phase two began in 1996.

You know how to do a thing if you know how to do it with relaxation. Now I know how to play the piano in a relaxed manner. And I can swim on for miles on end without stopping. For me swimming is a series of the different posts of reclining. For I shall do things for *pleasure* not from *pressure*. Yo thinks on Tuesday 3rd March that to be able to play the piano in a relaxed manner also means to be able to play it fluently. This is not so because while you read you may relax, you can never be perfect.

On 8^{th} March 1998 I join the Cultural Assets Tour which is organised by the Meguro Ward. We walk around in a guided tour with an elderly and knowledgeable volunteer. It is quite cold but the sun is shining. The path leads us up and down the hills before coming to an end at the Shibafu *hiroba* (open ground) on top of the hill in the Shibuya Ward, where I stay around longer to look sit in the sun and look at the Mt Fuji. Up here it is quite windy and cold. But there are many people around since it is Sunday. In the afternoon I go to a concert, again at the Komaba Park.

Nhăung says she has a summer course from 25 March until 15 May. My parents meet Nhan in Bangkok before they go together to Hạ́dyhăị. On 11^{th} March Paum says that she had lived in a dorm during her first two years in Syracuse. She had to move twice in the summer, that is first out and then in again. Then she moved to stay in an *apartment* for a year. She used to have many friends when she was still attending classes, but now most of them have already left. To create something you always have to do it alone. And PhD is usually the beginning of your creative career. She will be working with some pathologists. Once a good swimmer, she could now barely cover 700 metres in 40 minutes, stopping every 50 metres. This week is the spring break and she had been up to the lake with three friends and stayed there for one night.

But the weather was really cold, so there was nothing much they could do there. They spent the whole day and night in front of the fireplace, played card, watched the TV and chatted. The view from the living-room of this bed and breakfast is spectacular. She had to give up her plan of going show shoeing that morning since it was 15 Fahrenheit. In May she is going to drive her family up to Adirondack and possibly they will stay there four days.

Thailand seems to be in a really deep water. Until early last year it

used to be around ฿25 to a US dollar, but now (20 Mar.) it is about ฿40 to a dollar and Nhăung says that it is already a good sign and an improvement. This is waking up one day to find your buying power reduced by about one half. Six days later in all the due excitement it is now ฿38 to a dollar. I am glad all Thais are closer to God than the USers (or USites, US's, USese whatever) because we are the poorer between the two. Jesus says that it is very difficult for the rich to reach the kingdom of God. But to give the devil his due, it is good that they should choose to tell the Thais this way to severe the dependence upon them. Everybody grows up. Thais will never go anywhere if they still think the USese as being a god as they did in the past.

The Thai Embassy in Tokyo sends out emails to all the students to say that there is going to be a Thai trade fair during April and May, and the organisers are looking for an interpreter in case anybody is interested. I telephone one evening without much hope, for my Japanese is so poor you would never believe. I have to wait for a while before Murayama comes on the phone. He tells me that the company Nikkei Shouji is looking for an interpreter to work for three weeks at three different places. Since I am interested he asks me what my fees are, but I say I don't know. 'I have never worked as an interpreter before,' I tell him, 'What do you suggest?' 'What do people normally ask for?', I ask him. 'About ten thousand yens a day, I think,' he says. 'Then, I will say the same thing,' I tells him without thinking. On the morning of 8th April I take the train to the Kumyouji Station where the company is. The first floor is filled with furniture, but on the second floor Murayama is waiting. It turns out that he is the owner of the company after his father who had recently died. He decides that I could do the job, and half way through it gives me a raise in the salary of fifty per cent. I did not know I was talking to the owner when I asked him what I should ask for as a fee. I thought he was a clerk. What company would put you through to not even the manager but the owner on your first call! But I soon find out that this is by no means unusual. An interpreter are much closer to the boss than you would think. He reports directly to him, sits with him at the table, and share not only his ideas but also his thoughts. In a negotiation, for example, he needs to know the purpose, if not the strategy, of the meetings.

But I only interpret for the demonstrators and the people who come to look at their products and demonstration. Nekkei Shoji is a big company who organises events like this every year at various places within Japan. The theme varies from one exhibition to another. Now it is the Thai products and crafts, and the places are all at branches of the Takashima *ya* (department store). We are at Konandai during 15 – 21

April, in Yokohama 22 – 28 April, and at Tamagawa 29 April – 5 May 1998. Among those for whom I interpret are Khiang, Ṇàrongġaśakd́xi, Seṛiẏa, Soboṇ, Tīk and Vànid́ạ. The Naraya is also here which is to become a successful shop with many outlets in the future. With it are Vạsànạ, Nan, É and others. As a shop they are professional in their organisation. After the event the owner of the company and Vạsànạ's husband comes to Japan and takes everyone in the company to the Tokyo Disneyland when I am also invited to come along. Soḅhoṇ is from the *Śụnẏa Śilàpàhatthàkarrm Bụ̄enḅàn* (heritage handicraft centre) in Nàgaur Śrịdharrmàraj, Thailand. She makes the most beautiful items from *yàn libhao*, bamboo and *ḅaị lạn*. Tīk is from the *Śụnẏa Utsạhàkarrm Daṃròm Ḅặusràng* (Ḅặusràng umbrella-making industrial centre) at Sankaṃbạeng in Jiangmhăị.

Japanese bathe together naked. It is so normal here, and no one gives it a second thought. I am a Thai, but I have lived here for three years and I forget how to think as a Thai. It is only from the correspondences with my people at home that I now recall that many a Thai ladies would rather choose an instant death than such shame in the public bath as already described. So I have reached my own conclusion that no definitions of our adjectives or adverbs could possibly be definitive. After having thought it over for a while, I am now very happy with this conclusion of mine. But see how I avoid calling it a definition.

I am proud of the friend I have who lives in the US. She went to Washington DC on 28th April. There she gave a presentation and demonstration, both of which lasted two hours, to people among whom are politicians, congressmen, senators, and people in the military uniform.

I study the Japanese Sign Language every Thursday from 7th May until 6th August. These *shuwa tsūyaku* (sign-language interpretation) began on 23rd April when I was still interpreting Thai for Murayama. There is no class on 16 July and on the 30th of that month my *shukketsu* (attendance) card was stamped *ketsu* (absent) in red ink for no obvious reasons. The classes are cut short by my visit to Thailand. Japanese Signs is based on the American Sign Language. But it is Japanese all the same, and has several words which are intrinsically local, for example *bewu* which imitates the ritualistic *sumo* (Japanese wrestler) thanking gesture. These courses greatly increase my perspectives of language. Signs are the only languages on earth that are three-dimensional in their manifest. English, French, German, and all the other languages of Europe that I do not know are all written in one dimensional. Thai is written in x dimensions, where $1 < x < 2$ because it puts certain vowels, depending on what they are, may go above, below , or in front of the leading consonant. Lanna's writing is y-dimensional, where $1 < y < 2$

and $y > x$, since has all the degree-of-freedoms of Thai just mentioned as well as the migrations of consonant to under the leading alphabet when they are final. I design in 2002 on my own accord, based on Stokoe's systems, the writing of the ASL in one dimension using the roman letters. My interest in Signs which begins with these JSL courses I am taking now is boosted by my reading in 2002, while I will be staying at the St Gabriel dormitory in Manchester, books by Oliver Sacks, for example the *Seeing voices* (1989).

There is a welcome party at TIT at 6 pm on 14^{th} May. On 15 May 1998 I go to the Fuji *san* (mountain) with Megumi. She is a fast driver, but after some pleading on my part she slows down somewhat. And on the following day Thai students have their welcome party on the riverbed of the Futakotama *gawa* (river) where there are large open spaces, a perfect place for a barbecue party.

Paum and a couple of friends go to the lake in a park in Syracuse where they saw the sunset. The weather is nice. She usually come here to roller-blade, but now they visit the coffee house and have chocolate cakes. Next week she will probably come play the guitar here. 'I love summer', she says. Time flies, and meanwhile Nhăung is doing a project for her occupational health course, 16^{th} May 1998 . She had seen the video-tape about the systems of transportation and elimination of wastes in Japan.

In Japan the electronic products are so cheap that if someone buy a new model they will leave the old one outside their house for anyone to take. These are often in a perfectly good condition. And if they are unfit to use, they will cut the cord off to make sure that people do not use it by mistake. The costs of the waste elimination services and repairing are higher than buying a new one. Because of the present economic situation in Thailand my parents and sisters may postpone their trip to Japan until next year.

Paum writes on 28^{th} May 1998 that she has been back from Champaign for two weeks now. She was there on her younger sister's graduation. They will go white water rafting together before her sister goes back to Thailand to start working June. During her high school, she says, biology was her favourite subject.

Chaucer (*circa* 1340 – 1400) gives a definitive description about May, 'Hard is the herte that loveth nought in May'. However, this is not in Europe. And in Japan May means nothing of that sort. It is August, the *hachi gatsu* (eight month) anytime, the month *der Liebe*, the season when a girl of approximately twenty chooses to whom she would give her virginity.

Megumi has got a free ticket for two to explore the Tokyo Disney-

land for two days and stay one night at the hotel there, so we go there together during 6 – 7 June 1998. She says the tickets came from the lucky-draw made by the company whose *keitai denwa* (mobile phone) she uses. We are like two kids who on the 6th try the Beaver Brothers Explorer Canoes, Big Thunder Mountain, Cinderella Castle Mystery Tour, Country Bear Theater, The Enchanted Tiki Room, Haunted Mansion, It's A Small World, Mark Twain Riverboat, Meet the World, Pinocchio's Daring Journey, Pirates of the Caribbean, Skyway to Fantasyland, Snow White's Adventures, Splashdown Photos, Splash Mountain, Star Tours, and Tom Sawyer Island Rafts. On the following day, 7th June, we are at it again in all the earnest. This time we do the Chip'n Dale's Treehouse, Gadget's Go Coaster, Grand Circuit Raceway, Jungle Cruise, The Mickey Mouse Revue, Peter Pan's Flight, Roger Rabbit's Car Toon spin, Star Jets, Swiss Family Treehouse, Visionarium, and Western River Railroad. Perhaps she likes me? I never thought I would see the Disneyland here because the tickets are very expensive, but I have already come here three times. It is like living in another world. The parades at night are superb and memorable with all the enthusiasms of their participants.

The Splash Mountain is where you cruise along in a boat looking at the displays of animals and fantasy villages, and then hold your breath while the boat takes a sharp drop in the middle of which there is a flash of light overhead when the Splashdown Photos camera takes the picture of the falling you. The Star Jets is a *roller-coaster* (switchback) which twists and turns inside a building such that you are surrounded by stars and nebulae wherever you go. I would never have thought that I could like the Roger Rabbit's Car Toon spin as much as I do. The round cars and the soft, cushioned, spinning bumping with the other cars and into the doors. It is such a relaxing experience, and I find that I like this no less than the Star Jets which was earlier my favourite.

My Syracuse friend will play single again. 'EC40!', (easy for thee) I say to myself borrowing the expression she sometimes uses, she is sweeping the medals from every tournament. As never shall I play chess with Tanya I shall never play tennis with Paum. Not that I like winning but I do not like losing. She went to see 'Mulan' on the third week of June, and enjoyed it greatly. This is a story about China and, I should have guessed, Mulan.

As of 30 June 1998 there are a total of 7,536 people of foreign nationals registered here in Meguro. Twenty per cent of these, that is 1,542 people, are from either the Republic of Korea or the People Democratic Republic of Korea (since 1948). What names can be more misleading than having as the title for a democratic country 'republic' while calling a communist country 'people democratic republic'. A similar thing used

to be the case with the Democratic Republic of Germany or the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (7 October 1949 – 3 October 1990) which was communist, while the West Germany was called the Federal Republic of Germany, until the re-unification of the two in 1990. The number of people from other countries are namely from China 1,444, the US 1,094, Philippines 486, the UK 415, Indonesia 214, Germany 192, Australia 184, Nepal 157, France 153, Canada 153, India 134, Thailand 115, Malaysia 102, Brazil 92, Bangladesh 68, Italy 67, Switzerland 59, Sri Lanka 58, Pakistan 49, Iran 44, Sweden 43, Vietnam 38, New Zealand 33, Russia 30, Ireland 29, Spain 28, Denmark 28 and Belgium 25. Among the rest, 446 are from some other countries while 14 are stateless.

I enjoy being with my friends in the Net. I am old, and in my time we called it 'cyberspace'. It is a real world because I, for instance, do not imagine these people up as I do when I write a novel. This proves that there are more than one real worlds. Though in though in this case one is only a subset of another, it is still a good start. The possibility is already there. I do not have to meet them in the spatial world, as different from the c-spatial one. We have no needs for the unnecessary disappointments. 'I agree with you that sometimes we buy too much and make home like a mess', Yo said. Meanwhile Paum goes to dinners with friends. Together they talk, play games, and then eat some cakes. I must remember, if Yo comes to Japan, to be her guide and give her free meals. Paum, 16^{th} July, has been working on some pathological algorithms. But she, 'Haven't found any killer paper yet', also she says.

On 27^{th} July 1998 I complain to myself, 'It's raining half of the time, the other half it is hot all over!' The next day a friend writes to me who lives in Nagasaki, 'My life has been a complete bore for a long period. Everyday is the same old routine and I sometimes wonder how long I'm going to go on like this'.

Between 6^{th} and 9^{th} August 1998 I go to the Saitama *ken* (prefecture) for a short home-stay for the summer holidays organised by the YWCA. I stay at Keiko and Teruyoshi's place. *Toukyou* (Tokyo) is shaped like a dumbbell horizontally placed. Meguro ward where I live is on the right end while Saitama district is on the far left.

The *chi* (city) in Tokyo are Akigawa, Akishima, Choufu, Fuchū, Fussa, Hachiou, Hamura, Higashikurume, Higashimurayama, Higashiyamato, Hino, Houya, Kiyose, Kodaira, Koganei, Kokubunji, Komae, Kunitachi, Machida, Mitaka, Musashimurayama, Oume, Tachikawa, and Tanashi. The *ku* (ward) are namely Adachi, Arakawa, Bunkyou, Chiyoda, Chūou, Edogawa, Itabashi, Katsushika, Kita, Koutou, Meguro, Minato, Nakano, Nerima, Ōta, Setagaya, Shibuya, Shinagawa, Shinjuku, Suginami, Sumida, Taitou, Toshima; The *machi* (town) are Hinode, Itsukaichi, Mizuho,

Okutama, while the only *mura* (village) is Hinohara.

'It is very hot in Laṃpaṇg,' Nhăung says on 1st August. She has just come back from a few days in Kaṃbaengbejr and Sukhọday. Kei has just sent me a letter on 3rd August. She says that she has nothing to do but to study Thai and to write letters, 'so I write letters almost everyday'. But post office is very far, so she only goes there once a week. On 9th August she goes to the Rose Garden. Paum has just finished writing her first conference paper on 10^{th} August 1998 , and has already submitted it. Then she spends the rest of the day making a gift for a friend who has just graduated. For $20 she has bought a tent, only to find out that it is much smaller than what the ad says. They slept in the woods and it was so cold during the night that she could hardly sleep. They went canoeing along the river. 'It was so beautiful and calm,' she says, 'Not too many people around'. She went swimming in the lake which is so big it looks almost like the ocean. Kei will go to Rayaung. Meanwhile, Khiang says (11 Aug.) that they have a new project at Phåluek Kàew, namely the 'amazing handicraft boat'.

In Thailand, Kei goes on 15^{th} August 1998 to Kạycànàḅuri where she rides on an elephant. They come back to Bangkok on Sunday. She goes to a dentist near her home and have to go there again more than four times. She thinks that her teeth were really bad. Dentists always find your teeth bad. Somehow they find ways to keep them so that they do not run out of business. It is interesting to see how by some sleight of the hand they juggle from bad inlay fittings, to excessive removals of enamel and dentine, to designing surprise root-treatments. I have no opinions regarding these people, lest I judge. We seek to repair the Temple of God, but they plot to destroy it. Before we mention this their sin existed but unperceived. Now that it is said there is nowhere for them to hide from the His wrath except to repent and turn God-afearing. Those equipped with no creative faculties always prey on those others who have them, catch them unaware, and get away with it. Time this is, when professional codes of conduct of people in such health sectors *art fled to the brutish beasts*. On 16^{th} August 1998 I go on the cruise on the Sumida River with Michiko and Yukiko. We meet at the Hamamatsu Station at 11 am at the gate on the side towards the Shimbashi Station.

Vultures appear in many forms. Those physicians and dentists who prolong your illnesses or worsen them are one, while people who plagiarise your works another. Why they have such a low respect for themselves I can never imagine. Even research reports and books I write are plagiarised. But in a way plagiarism is the best kind of flattering. If only *they* also know how to appreciate the works they are copying. Copying a work is the misuse done to the author, misunderstanding one is the

misuse done to the work itself. If you feel you really need to plagiarise my works, then I suggest that it is by no means too difficult to copy but nobly. There is only a fine dividing line between creativity on one hand and vandalism on the other. 'J'ai dit!'

I like dentists and plagiarists who are god-afearing.

Khiang says on 17 August that K will pick me up from the Ḍaunmuang Airport on 24 August as he promised he would. I make a great discover today, 22^{nd} August 1998 , when I find out that if you are a man, then you could sit in front of the computer writing a report all night until, by the time it is morning, your beard has grown noticeably, so now you have the stubble that was not there last night when you first sat down. The funny thing is that you would never think this is strange if it happened while you were sleeping.

I am in Thailand this time from 24 August until 13 September 1998.

During 11 – 13 September 1998 is the Eighth Working Men Art Exhibition organised by the Meguro *kinrou fukushi kaikan* (Working Men's Welfare Hall). I have one of my pictures exhibited here under the title *Hawaii Kilauea kasan no funkaguchi* (Hawaii Kilauea Crater).

When I was still little what everyone told me implies that Christians are imbeciles. Now I know it was us who were the one. Even in the supposed kingdom of God, Europe, Faith could be so obscurely little. 'How can a man create the earth, not to mention the whole universe?', we ask, 'The sizes are greatly different'. But the imbeciles were us. Who said that God was a man? Darwin (1809 – 1882) with his *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) was believed by most to have obliterated the credibility of God by proving that the evolutionary process is not abrupt but continuous. Who said that God's creation was spontaneous? Percolation is His tool, and it normally looks as abrupt as a singularity. But the the percolative *process* necessary to create that instantaneous change is always long. Such a process, for instance, needed for the birth of a single person takes as long as, or even longer than the time needed for the formation of the earth. Some of the processes may take longer than the age of the present universe. Percolation was already there when we still did not see it. That does not mean that it did not exist then. Death is always instantaneous, but it was once thought that that was all there was to it. Now we know that death is also a percolation, because aging is a percolative process. Even deaths by an accident are percolation too, since accidents are percolation because it is causal and a causal process is a percolative process. Karma is clearly a percolative process. And since karma causes deeds, these latter must be a percolation also. The saying 'Karma is deeds', can be put in other

words as 'All percolative processes are a percolation'. The concept of God is the same as that of the Superset and the Creator, which are respectively intrinsically mathematics and physics. Therefore not only that God is limited to no particular religions, but also prophets may ignore neither one of these scientific field. By the Superset Assumption, science and all religions are a subset of God. By the Creator Supposition, all creations are but a part of the Creation. In this light, where do all the inter-religion conflicts come in?

Prophets speak the language of God. All writers are prophets, provided that he writes for not only money but also what he knows he has to write. This is why societies where He is feared both produce books of the better quality and respect writers the more. The only thing hindering this short of the absolute heaven for the all authors is the imperfection regarding this Holy-mindedness. This is, however, a relieve, for otherwise the world would have been a boring place to be born in indeed. Prophets are never regarded without respects, except in his own family and amongst his own people. The reason for this is that, if we thought that the most immediate and obvious creation, that our parents created us, is the only one there is to one's life, then necessarily one may never be the only child in the family who reaches God. Putting it simply, the part may never be closer to perfection than the whole. But the God-loving creatures know better. And they have ample evidences to testify their believe which point to the existence of a common creator, for example all the advances in science, the breaking of athletic records, and the betterment of species through the evolutionary process.

Paum writes on 15^{th} September 1998 to say that she has been away travelling. She went to the Yellow Stone with some friends where there were bisons, elks, mountain goats, big-horn sheep and bull dear. But they missed the bear. Then they went to NY City to see the US Open. On their way back from NY, last Sunday around 11 pm, they met a severe thunder storm which lasted for about one hour. She had never seen such storm where the flashes of thunder lit up the dark sky every few minutes. The sight was awesome, but it was awful. They found out that half of the trees in the city were rooted. The wind speed exceeded 80 mph. The Slocum Height area where she lives in was evacuated. It had been hit by one tornado and ten out of 35 buildings were devastated. The university put her in a hotel for a week with everything paid for, and she is quite happy about this.

On 16^{th} September 1998 I fly JAL from Bangkok to Japan instead of my NorthWest flight because there is a strike going on. The pilots of NorthWest want a higher salary, and they get it. I did not know that the company has been successful at its cut-throat pricing policy at the

expense of its staffs. My actual flight was supposed to be two days ago, on Monday. It rains heavily on the way to the Airport.

Last night (today being 17 Sept.) it rained a lot while I was going to the airport. The traffic was in a very sorry state. At the airport I did not have enough money to pay the airport tax. One reason for this is that the taxi costed more than I had expected, another that I had been playing the piano for too long that I forgot to look at the money. Mọ turned up out of nowhere and saved my life by lending me the needed ฿60. Then she took me to a restaurant inside the airport, which was by no means cheap. I must remember and buy some cigarettes for her the next time I goto Thailand, because that was what she asked for. Since I have stopped smoking I no longer buy cigarettes for friends.

That is not everything yet. While inside the plane I fainted twice walking along the aisle. No less than 10 JAL hostesses had to take turn looking after me and do things for me after that. I do not know why it happened, I think it must have been either the glass of red wine I drank, or the tobacco smoke, or the air inside the plane, or all these three combined. The side of my head still hurts now from hitting the arm of the passenger seat. The plane did go through turbulent air once or twice. My seat was an aisle seat. Sitting there I felt fine. But a hostess asked me to give up my seat to a woman, and so I moved over to her place and she to mine. The new seat was by the window on the left-hand side whereas the place where I formerly sat was an aisle seat in the inner row to the right. My first fainting happened while I walked from the new seat to the toilet.

I bought myself a new piano while I was in Bangkok. So this had been a somewhat expensive trip. After having the piano I tended to stay home a lot, which was very unusual. Pianos can sometimes turn even a hell into a home. But this was already a home, and now I plan to go there more often.

My father writes to me on 18^{th} September 1998 to say that Megumi had come to visit them with some presents. After having dinner both of my parents sent her back to the International Student Centre of the CMU where she currently stays. Nhăung says that when young man had fainted it is possibly from a poor health. For examples, anaemia,lack of vitamin or having some problem with your head. Because if you are healthy,you must have normal haemoglobin and haematocrit levels. Hb and Hct combine with the oxygen that is needed by the body tissues especially those brain tissues which are sensitive to the lack of oxygen. You can also faint if you are hypoglycemia (lack of glucose), because the brain tissues are taken off their supply of the glucose.

Kei writes on 20^{th} September 1998 to say that she is sorry for having

said and done many bad things to me. But I do not understand what she talks about, for she is the best thing that has ever happened in my life. Perhaps she thinks I am dying because I have fainted twice on the plane.

Nhan, on 21^{st} September 1998 , says that syncope only means that you briefly lose the consciousness due to poor circulation to the brain. Your consciousness will return when you lie down because of the better circulation caused by the supine position. You must avoid keeping your head upright because in so doing you can prolong the unconsciousness period as the result of which in some of the patients there may occur convulsive episodes which can be mistaken as seizures. There are many causes of syncope. One of these is when you fear something, for example when you see your own blood. This happened once around 1981 when I was stabbed in the palm of my left hand while rehearsing the sword fighting. Yes, rehearsing because that was for a show where you play from memory. Ironically you only hurt yourself in general during prepared fights, and seldom in a *ṭị kled́* (improvising bouts). This could mean that your subconscious mind can cope better with reflexes than with recitations. Standing under the sun for long period or drinking may also cause the syncope. The other thing is to avoid holding the urination. 'In case you have symptoms that are not related to these, please go to see your doctor to check for your heart because irregular heart beat can cause syncope. Other cause[s] of transient loss of consciousness that is not syncope is seizure, it can manifest only atonic attack. Seizure[s] have [a] different mechanism from syncope, it is due to excessive brain activity', she adds. If you have many episodes of loss of consciousness you could do well to have your EEG (Electroencephalograph) checked. According to her, you would think of syncope when: you have a presyncope symptom, for example dizziness or the feeling that you are going to faint, before the loss of consciousness; these episodes of the loss of consciousness is brief and you get better by the supine position; there is no urinary incontinence during the attacks; when you gain consciousness you feel no weaknesses that are localised to only one side of your body. Some medications can also cause you the syncope.

The *shūshoku katsudou* is the Japanese job-huntings. Contrary to what the people in the US may tell you, these are nothing different from job-huntings elsewhere. *Mā anussaven.* Believe nothing told or written for you about the people of the other countries.

Kei asks on 23^{rd} September 1998 how I eat the natto. She wonders if I add to it the soy sauce and karashi (mustard), and after that mix it for a long time. She says that if you add a *kimi* (yolk) of an egg it will taste better. There is no needs to leave the mixture stand for a long

time as she said. The important thing is to give it a rigorous stir, and then it is all ready. She reads news neither in English nor Thai. This I find it hard to believe, since all my students in Thai, for instance, never read nothing but Thai.

According to Asahi *shimbun* (newspaper) the missiles from North Korea were possible because there are at the moment some 2000 engineers from the former Soviet Union inside North Korea. These people help making and launching missiles toward Japan because they do not like the US. Unbelievable, isn't it? Why did they not fire Washington instead? Perhaps their technology is still not good enough and Washington is too far away. I think George Soros in America could perhaps offer these 2000 men jobs in the States so that this business is cut in the bud. I think what they really need is a good job. But it is also possible that they think deeper over there, that they perhaps want to keep a convenient buffer state. One can never trust someone who has bombed him, can he? Or indeed, can you trust anybody who has ever bombed somebody? Today is the autumn equinox day, and it is also a national holiday. What I do not understand is why an autumn equinox should have become a national holiday.

No need to say, having loved the natto is another turning point in my life, 24^{th} September 1998 . If you have not loved it, and you want to know what I am talking about, you could try the following method which I have discovered. *Experto credite!* I hated it no less than you do now, but have come to love it, again no less than anybody.

I like natto

(this is not irony or sarcasticism, I really like it.)

Nice natto, with shouyu and karashi,
Mixed, marinated, then eaten with rice.
Some have it with eggs, some with kimi.
Even without the two, for me, it's already nice.

Fermented beans, sauce and mustard,
Put together, and taken with gohan.
Don't go look for tamago nor yolk! (Neither exists in the cupboard.)
What's important is, for 15 minutes you should leave it stand'.

There are other experts around. I can not possibly be the only one to whom this has happened. If this method does not work for you all I can say is, 'Consult another expert!'

Kei says, 'If you add a yolk, you must use raw yolk. After I come home, let's eat together'. She says she loves Thailand and does not want to come back to Japan. Megumi, on the other hand, does not love the

natto as much as we do. She either is from, or has something to do with, Osaka, while the natto is revered only in Tokyo. I have taught the former Thai, but not the latter. But I have been together longer with the latter, so I hope both have equally learnt some Thai from me. And I hope that has been no little amount. My Japanese, however, remains as ignorant as ever and myself, them or no.

On 25^{th} September 1998 I go to Shibuya to have my visa extended. I am going to a conference at the Kawakuchi *ko* (lake) for a few days. You can never imagine what a *nattou* (natto, fermented soybeans) nut is until you have become one. One either hates the natto or loves it. This is something similar to the Marmite and the Vegemite. I know this because I used to hate, but now I like all of them. It is strange how the absolute hate becomes the absolute love. There can be no middle ground in this case. Once you have loved it, you can not understand yourself in the past when you used to hate it.

A natto nut to a natto nut

A natto nut to a natto nut,
'Ne! Natto nut ni natta no?'
A natto nut replied to a natto nut,
'Nani? Natto nut ni natta nan 'tte.'

'Nani 'tte nan ka. Natto ni natte mo
Nanimo nai desho?', continued the first natto nut.
'No, I mean, I am not a natto nut,
You don't understand me,' the second natto snapped.

'I don't understand you? My dear!
I know you are a natto nut,' went on the first.
'One shouldn't be called a natto nut
Only because one natto nut says he is,' quoted the second.

'A natto nut knows what only natto nut knows.
And that is, one couldn't have become a natto nut
Unless another natto nut who knows natto's lore
Teach him that lore to become a natto nut.'

'And what may that lore be?'
The second natto nut stammered
After remaining silent for minutes
By confusion'.

'That life and natto is somehow the same.
You didn't always like it. It was only a game.
Then came a day when something changed your mind
And you thought that, hey! life could be kind'.

Megumi says on 27th September that yesterday they went to a temple to give alms. I think that it was the temple to the north of the town that my parents have been building. 'Bracâo tón lhoang', its name is, meaning the big *bracâo* (Buddha, Buddha image, god). The name is in Lāṇṇạ. In Thai, the word *bracào* means a god, *bra buddhácào* the Buddha, and *bra buddhárụp* the Buddha image. The name of this temple in Thai could be something like *bra buddhárụp ongġa ẏhăị* (big Buddha image).

Ken is a design engineer who writes codes for software tools that support programming on a 32-bit Microchip, the ST20. Sometimes he likes his job, at other times not. He is still doing the Shaolin Kungfu on 1st October. There is a grading on Saturday, but he will not be there as everything will be in Chinese then and he will not understand. It is no jesting when I said I am not going to graduate. Megumi stays at the hotel near the Ḍaunmuang Airport in Bangkok, which seems to her like a ghost house. She has arrived there straight from Jiangmhăị. The following day my father writes to say that she had got on along very well with everyone in my family. He tells me to write as often as I want to. 'We all like to hear from you', he says.

Nhăung has written that she has bought a UPS two days ago, this being the 3^{rd} October 1998 . She says that while Megumi was in Jiangmhăị she meet my parents almost everyday when they had their evening meal together. They want to know the way I live in Japan, so they asked her and she should know.

On Saturday 3rd October 1998 I buy a pair of in-line skates from Sports Gallery at Himonya. They cost me ¥4,980, which is by no means expensive, considering that my happiness depends on it. Once inside the TIT campus at Ōokayama the road finds the Centennial Memorial Building on the right, the library on the left, and then makes a circle around the large plot of ground lined with the Sakura trees in front of the *honkan* (main building). This is where I practise on my new skates. Going backwards is fun when you know how to do it. I tend to fall down often, and that is nothing funny.

This is 7^{th} October 1998 , you see. You know, when I went to Hawaii there were at least 10 days which I walked about 50 miles a day. There was no public transportation in any one of the islands except the Oahu. So I was walking from town to town as well as walking around.

I have just bought a pair of in-line skates. I am doing it everyday now. I think it will probably be handy when I travel again.

I went to a conference at a place which was beside a large lake and close to the Mount Fuji. I walked around and was not at the conference except when I had to talk and another time when I had to moderate a session. I always walk around during conferences. So you have here

perhaps the most uninitiated of researchers.

I gave a speech the other day. But I was reading my own speech because I could not remember it. So it was someone else who won the contest. I enjoy giving speeches, especially when there are some people there to listen to me, because it relaxes me much the same way playing the piano does. But I am terribly bad at both.

On 16^{th} November 1998 ,

I am ugly as a toad

I am ugly as a toad,
You are fair as a cockroach
Which sits upon a boat.

When you approached
I called to you, 'Float!'
You replied, 'No, you just ride on a boat!'

A fiction is never difficult to create. You essentially make in your imagination the world of your own, much the same way that God does in His. Who know, the universe could be merely electric signals going back and forth inside the grey cells of God's brain, and in our own's some people may similarly live. Spare them!

I am a goat

I am a goat.
You are a toad.
I come on a boat.
You ride on the coach
On a road.

'Don't stay forever on the road!'
'Come to the boat!'
'Forget the road!'

On 17^{th} November 1998 Megumi writes what I turn into this poem.

Look at the skies!
You can see a big fireball of the Leonids.
The site offers a live show of Leonid meteors,
a panorama of shooting stars
expected in the early hours of your birthday.
The shooting stars are predicted to appear
in the greatest numbers from 4 to 5 am
The show is expected to be the most
intense and beautiful barrage in 32 years!
I hope you get this message in time.
First of all,congratulations on your happy birthday.

Surely she does not mean '32 years'. This is my 32nd birthday. Did they, the messengers of the Lord, come in 1966 on the very day I was born? But, fortunately, I think that I was born not between 4 and 5 am but in the afternoon, according to what is written anyway. O Lord, I wish I knew what Your message is. I am a nobody, so sure this is not for me.

O Lord!
Give me not the answers, but
give me the questions,
plenty of courage and
the facility to understand.

Nhăung also sends a 'Happy birthday' by the email. She is going to up to the mountain to look at the raining stars about 5 pm. She is still doing another degree at the Sukhǫday Dharrmạdhirạj University. Her class has a course work in Bangkok in mid-December. In the end she chooses to use the Pine program instead of the MS Word to write the card which says, 'Lucky in game and lucky in love'. This reminds me of what we used to sing in the La Traviata, 'Lucky indeed! Good fortune is once again with Alfredo. He is again the winner!'

Well, it is now 18^{th} November 1998 and I was born exactly 32 years ago in 1966. I shall become a poet.

Law of Bad

Never get tired of being bad!
When you do, try relax while bad.
And by and by, no one will be mad
Enough again to call you bad.

That is, when you are no more sad
By the fact that you are being bad.
And if you call this mad
I will be glad
By the fact that you are still bad
By calling this mad.

Start by being bad
For a while first, then being bad
For a long time. Then forever bad.
Don't be sad!
You should be glad
That you are very bad.

'Never married, I am divorced', seems to be a good theme for a poem. But due to the lack of time and space it shall have to wait until another occasion as fits.

Since our divorce

Since our divorce
I've grown up while you've grown old.
Not meeting you is like eating the *nattou.*
You don't like it at first
But you come to love it later.

You never fully understand a poet. I, for instance, could never understand myself.

I am a bat

I am a bat.
You are a rat
Who runs away from a cat
That sits upon a hat.

The rat is fat,
And you are the rat.
The cat
On the hat
Sees that
And it jumps at
The rat,
Not the bat.

I can not see the Holy Fireworks, however, when they are at their densest. It is funny we should look for signs, considering that God is here everyday, so I am glad the time difference of a few hours between our countries means that it is already light here when this happens. So presumably all day they do somersaults all over the sky and yet I behold them not for the sun. The first one that I see is not an hour after the midnight has passed, when it is now Thursday 19^{th} November 1998 and my brother's birthday.

I saw the Leonids

I saw the Leonids
Travelled the sky on my birthday.
The first and the most beautiful one
I saw between twelve and one am
Going over
The main building at TIT.

It was large,
Looked more like a firework
Than a meteorite.
Its trajectory was flat,

It was so bright
That night.

Then I left my work
And went up to the roof top
To see more of them.
And I saw more of them.
Another one which I liked
Came at around four a.m.

It gave two pulses
Of cold silvery light
Then dies away
Into the night.
Unlike the other one's warm light
It was not as bright.

Today, Saturday 21st November 1998 , I quietly write some more poems. What do I care if no one thinks these are poems, for time will tell. And there are no limits to time as far as we are concerned.

Silence rules

Silence rules.
It was here before me and you,
So it ruled.
It will be here when we were gone too,
So it will rule.
So it rules.

The road leads ever on and on into the darkness. But the unknown paths are better than the well-trodden ones because they open up more ground for creativity. Never fear the unknown, nor in the known hope to find solace and safety.

Silence or darkness?

Which came first,
Silence or darkness,
I do not know.
If you try coining sentences like
'That darkness is silent,' or
'That silence is dark'
You still get nowhere
Close to the answer.

But since to me silence is virtue
While darkness vice,
I hope the former came first,

So it rules the other one.
Am I right?

Whether a thing is go or not, your promoting it is irrelevant.
Let the silence resound

Since my best was no good
I will let it go.
Retreat with all my might!
Let the silence resound!

Isogaba maware!
Therefore I shall fear no defeats.
When you flee, Fly for your life!
No sound resounds.

We had crabs at our party as well as other things, today being the 28^{th} December 1998 . They were very fresh so they smell and taste very nice. It is a pity that I was in Thailand for only two weeks instead of three. Three would have been just right. Too many things to do in so little a time.

I go back to Thailand again during 12 – 28 December 1998. Now that the piano has become another language of mine, I find myself reading new musics night and day. I read all the periods I know, from before Baroque to after Late Romantic.

This is 29^{th} December 1998 , firstly there are two important terms, one is *status*, the other one *entitlement*. Next, there are two more important terms which will be used later, one is *PhD student*, the other one *PhD candidate*. The PhD study starts with three years of registered research term with a university. During these three years the researcher is called a *student* even though no studying is done, just research works. Here the status is that of a student. At the end of the third year, the student either graduates or not. If he could not make it in time for the graduation, and if the teacher thinks that it is still possible for him to get a PhD within two more years, then there are essentially two possible ways. There are many reasons which could result in this, for example if the research topics had been changed too many times.

The first one of these two ways is for the student to register again as a third year student. This he can do two more times, *i.e.* two consecutive years following his actual third-year status. By doing this he can have a student card and can use the university's library. Another way is via what so-called *entitlement*. The student is doing a research for a PhD and has been registered with the university for three years as required, therefore he becomes entitled to complete what he has been doing within two more years thereafter. This entitlement makes it possible for a PhD

student to become a PhD candidate. This is not necessarily so. A PhD student could become a candidate for the PhD only with the consent of his advising teacher. And his advisor, seeing that he is still doing not too bad in his research at the end of his third year enrolment, would normally advise him to resort to the candidate status. This is especially so if he considers his student not that financially well-off. A PhD candidate may not use the university's library and he does not have a student ID card. But he works normally with his supervisor otherwise, and his status as a PhD candidate is recognised by the university only because of the consent of his supervisor.

In my case, it was my supervisor who suggested that I resort to become a PhD candidate. Therefore I assume that the university recognises my status as being one also. But if you have to ask someone to make sure that this is so, then probably you should ask my advisor first, not the university's staffs, for the reason given in the explanation of the paragraph above.

This is why I stated Aeronautic and Space Exploration Research as the field which I would like to work in in my application form. It is the field which is most likely to be related to the topic of my research.

I would like to carry on explaining a little bit further about 'Ph.D. candidate'. As I said above, it is three years of being a 'Ph.D. student', and then two more years of being a 'Ph.D. candidate' who is recognised by the university. After these two more years the student is still called a Ph.D. candidate if he has not yet been able to obtained the Ph.D. But in this case, the university no longer recognise this status of his. And if he happens to be able to finish the research with a result which satisfies his supervisor then, then his supervisor could still recommend him to the university with the research result to entitle him to a Ph.D.

I should give a summary. A 'Ph.D. candidate' does not hold a student ID card but he is recognised by the university of this status of his. The recognition is in the way that the university would expect to see his final thesis at the end of the year for two more years in a row, as it would a 'Ph.D. student'.

In my last email, I pinned my recognised 'Ph.D. candidate status' down earlier than two more years, ie. until March 2000. This is only because the fact that my supervisor is going to be retired then. But to be honest, I don't think his retirement from the university will matter at all in this 'entitlement'. That is, I really think that the university would still recognise my status until March 2001.

From Shinagawa we go to Ōgaki on 31^{st} December 1998 . Between 1^{st} and 5^{th} January 1999 we are going to Kyushu with the Seishun-18 ticket. Megumi and I travel all the way to Kyūshū, which is the big island on the

south of Japan, by train during New Year of 1999. At one station there a sculpture is raised with the writing on the plaque saying that it is on the 36° N latitude. At Kusasenri there are horses standing in a row amidst the mist. The grass is all golden and brown, and the weather is so bad one could hardly see a thing. Mt Aso in May is said to be beautiful with Azalea's purple. The train from Tsubame to Kyūshū has compartments on both sides of the corridor like trains in Europe. The word *tsubame*, written differently from the name of that city, also means the *swallow* in Japanese. On Sunday 3rd January I watch two elderly ladies, who are standing on the opposite sides of the road to each other brushing the sidewalks, as they stop doing that to chat and laugh with each other briefly before resuming what they were doing. Today we come to as far as the Sakura Island. This is land is a national park and it is very quiet here. It seems a very romantic place and would have been an ideal place for a honeymoon. It has a cone of the volcano both enormous and tall right in the middle. The ferry coming here from Kyushu takes about fifteen minutes. We cross over in the morning and I stand on the deck at the head of the ferry, feeling myself like di Capricio standing at the head of the Titanic in the film of the same name. I also feel like being Alan Quaterman in the adventure novel. It seems like we are approaching the Treasure Island. At the ferry terminal there are several telephone booths separated from each other by a partition on which people always hang their things to make their call and then forget about, and leave them there after they finish. Today, for instance, I see one coat and a scarf here. Tomorrow there is going to be another coat and a cap. The ticket for the ferry costs ¥150. You only pay on the Sakura Island. There are no reception desks for the tickets on the Kagoshima side. From the ferry terminal we walk to the Youth Hostel which is eight minutes away on the hill behind it. Further down the road, along the coast, there is the Nagisa path, a lovable walk-way along which you can see the main land of Kyushu and the ferries when they arrive. There are also the A, B, C, and D courses of the lava trails. If from the terminal you turn left instead of right, you will find a path where you can climb up to the to of the hill from where you can see the sea and the Kagoshima City in the distance. It is sad when we have to leave this place so early in the morning after having only been here since yesterday, but such is our lives. It is already good enough we have been here. In a way I am lucky to have Megumi with me because her Japanese is much better than mine, and also she can think and plan things so quickly such that we not only never miss a train but always are on the fastest one to boot. Of course our fastest trains have nothing to do with the *shinkansen*, dubbed the *bullet* or the *super-express* trains, but still there are various degrees of express trains

not to mention the local ones which stop at each and every station. The Japanese English is less unique in comparison to none. Thus the *toiret* is a *toilet* and when you think somewhere some wire leaks you say that the electricity is escaping somewhere. 'But it is OK', as Yann will always say in a few years to come.

Trains here in Kyūshū are like those 3rd-class ones in Thailand because they have side-framed seats and a narrow shelf next to the window for putting up a table. The windows of both are also of the same style, that is to say, the three-stepped vertically-movable glass panels. Those fish on the ridge of the roofs, which stick its tail up in the air as though they were practising the yoga, is called the Shachihoko. They have a face like a dragon but their tail is that of a fish. Both the fish and the Asian dragon live in the water, therefore this is the thing which protect the house against fire. Along our way there is always the big plain with mountains in the background. I like sitting on a train going across Kyūshū because you can think about all the things while you sit here looking at the farms, houses, and the plain, all of which are lit by the sunlight of this nice weather. This is peace and beauty. Trying not to copy others can be difficult. Students, for instance, copy their teachers. High school students take after stars. People always try to imitate a successful someone. Christians want to have the mind of Jesus. And when you say, for instance, that you believe in the sun sign and astrology, well you are copying others too.

The Ohori Park is close to the city centre in Fukuoka. Its landmark is the lake which is divided in the middle by an island and the bridges leading to and away from it. It is a good two-kilometre path around the lake. The Fukuoka Art Museum is in the south-eastern part of the park. It contains works by Shigeru Aoki, Marc Chagall (1887 – 1985), Joan Miró (1893 – 1983), Hanjiro Sakamoto, Andy Warhol (1929 – 1987), *etc.*

On 5^{th} January 1999 we pass a place along the track where there are long roads with smooth surfacing. It is close by the field and a waterway. I think one could roller-skate here for hours. We pass a place where there is a board on which people tie their fortune-strips. Behind it on the background is the sea and beyond this a piece of land. Three children are standing in front of the board with their back turned towards us, adding the strips in their hands to the ones already there. We pass those parts of the sea where people farm pearls. The pearl farms are essentially the sea next to the coast where poles come up at intervals and black spreadings cover the surface like rafts. There is a telephone on this car! Its colour is green.

In-fashion now for men are trousers so large that the part which is normally on the underside of your middle hangs half a thigh below the

scrotum. For women you can still see the saggy socks that have been here for years. But on top of that are the shoes with soles thicker than those of the wooden clogs. Sometimes these soles are put on the underside of the boots. Going out is the Doraemon while coming in is the cat Kitty Chan and the frog Keroppy. I still have one of the earliest breeds of that cat when it first came out about a year ago and still had to make itself known. At and event organised by the Meguro Ward I was the only adult and the last one in the queue of people lining up for a free souvenir. No children in front of me (and that means all the rest of the queue) touched the cat, so sitting there on the table, the last one left, I had no other choices but it to choose. But look at it now! How people are prepared to spend a lot of money on things they have no uses for, simply because there is a picture of that cat on them! People never change! Nothing puts to sleep like sitting here on a warm train in the afternoon of a cool day. The back of these two-way seats here work with the same principle as the windscreen-wiper. Here, instead of the wiper, the back cushion remains vertical when you toggle it backwards and forwards.

Hakata's *rāmen* (Chinese noodle) looks like the Chachūmen or the Thai *ḅamhĭ*. Kyoto's ramen is sweet, transparent and light. The Nagoya's Kishimen, on the other hand, has thick strip-like noodles as those of the Houtou. Its soup is coloured as, and salty like the *shouyu* (soy sauce). But the Champon tops them all. It is a hotchpotch in the Chinese style originated in Nagasaki. The word *champon* means a mixture or a medley.

There is a dome shaped like the peanut. And during the night the nurseries in the fields, which are covered with plastic sheets and look like half-buried tubes, are lit up with lamps on the inside, presumably to keep it warm. A training *maiko* (dancing girl) is an apprentice *geisha* (professional entertaining lady). Kei says she is one, but I think she must be kidding. Geishas entertain men in who know how many manners. It is one thing if they entertain you, but what man wants to marry a practising one.

Sitting on a train I have lots of plans and things that I want to do. There will be little chance of seeing all of them through. I want to do researches on Economics, Mathematics and Languages. Among other things I want to visit the Louvre. If you look in my copy of *Le Petit Larousse, dictionnaire encyclopédique* at home, you will find that it is the only item in there which is manually highlighted. It is true I want to walk the Grand Canyon too, and also to draw, or do something with the piano and the violin. I shall never understand why Nakaura, Okabayashi and Tran are so averse to me. Their keeness for the competition I shall never have, nor could ever anticipate. You feel like sitting in the inside of a huge, long straw, when all the doors separating the cars of the

underground train are opened. This is because, without the doors, the remaining parts of the partition on both sides of the door are only as wide as the width of the seats.

'Suck!', I thought to myself, 'This is no moon! This is the Leonids, and it is huge!' I am now spending all my time outside the lab. Ever since Katsuhisa has told me that I need more than three years to complete my degree I have quitted, and there is no need for me to be here, therefore, except for the emailing. But nature is still here, and there has been no snow during the past eleven months or so. Between my PhD and God, what is more important to *you*? If you say it is the latter which is the more important, then you can be sure that is the case for *me* too. This proves the insignificance of a PhD, since even if it is nothing to you who currently are spending you life reading *my* book, then it is next to nothing to the universe. And if to the whole it means naught, then to me who is but a part of that whole it could mean nothing more. On the other and, if you think my PhD is more important for *you*, then you may have it because I do not want it. I would rather spend all my life doing the various projects, trying to find a perfect one, than settle for a mediocre one now and go to my grave having nothing to say to the whole which is Him. The process of searching is everything. The answer, if it ever or even existed, means nothing. It is only a pity that he told me this too soon, that is to say that I would need more time when there was still no less than three months before my third year status ends. As my creative power tends to work best towards an approaching deadline, with the project suddenly discontinued in the middle of the acceleration I have no other where to vent it but on literature. So on 9^{th} January I read Ken Follet's *The key to Rebecca*, on the 17^{th} Caleb Carr's *The Alienist*, on the 19^{th} Agatha Christie's *Dead man's mirror*, *Murder in the mews*, *The incredible theft*, and *Triangle at Rhodes*. I write my first book shortly after I go back to Thailand.

Andy is going to be married in Christchurch on Friday 19^{th} February 1999 . Today I write to Mum and Dad, and to Jeanette and Charlie, in New Zealand. Then the following day, 10^{th} January, we go to Chiba by train. The weather is simply lovely, with the sun shining. From here we look at the Mt Fuji. A couple of pigeons get inside the train, and people feed them with chips. I have seen no other area in Japan which has the number of cute girls exceeding that which I am seeing here now at the eastmost JR station of Honshū, in Chiba. I shall never let anybody into this. However the omnipresents are no secrets, so I can tell you that they are the Lawson, noodle shops, police booths, Seven-Eleven, and the vending machines.

On 12^{th} January 1999 at the Tamachi Station around fifty pigeons

together from the ground, leaving only one or two remain standing, which reminds me of the tragic scene, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, how,

> All in a moment through the gloom were seen
> Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
> With orient colours waving: with them rose
> A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
> Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
> Of depth immeasurable. ...

.

I want to have the water-melon seeds that Mọ had sent me back from Kei, 1^{st} February 1999 .

I read the *Far from the madding crowd* (1874) by Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928). As for my work here, 'Tetélestai', as Christ has said on the cross. Though it has started my lifetime research, so 'The petty done, the undone vast'. I believe no Hardy when he says, 'better wed over the mixen than over the moon', but it is mostly true when he says,

> ...love becomes solicitousness, hope sinks to misgiving, and faith to hope: when the exercise of memory does not stir feelings of regret at opportunities for ambition that have been passed by, and anticipation does not prompt to enterprise.

He could be witty but too pessimistic.

The study of clusters leads to the idea of clusters of languages. I define languages as crucial links that bind society to form social clusters and writing systems as those that bind languages to form language clusters. This is the first time that such binding forces can be mathematically described with precision, since any writing system is essentially a mapping. The problem of binding two languages together is then reduced to the problem of finding a common writing script. Here I choose the roman script because it is already an important binding force which binds together, among others, American, English, Hindi, Pali, and Sanskrit. Even Chinese is already half-bound to this largest cluster, and it would be rather imbecile and impossible to try to reinforce some other script if a smooth globalisation is what one has in mind.

The problem of finding a common written script is in turn reduced to that of finding a one-to-one and on-to mapping between the new script and the existing one. This at once breaks at least two new grounds. Not only will one have the binding force but also one will be able to describe or even prove it precisely. And fortunately for those who value the importance of cultural diversities, nowhere in history does one see the loss of these through a redundancy of writing scripts. The Devanagari script is still for writing Sanskrit and the Hebrew script Hebrew, even

though either one of these can be mapped on to the roman script one to one. On the other hand, America is not a Commonwealth country even though American and English are linguistically speaking almost identical to each other, let alone sharing a common writing system. The one-to-one mapping allows us to be able to read important things in different cultures in their original languages within our lifetime.

Science, while observing the specifics, strives for the general. Writing system is the rare case which is unambiguous in the non-exact field of language. Percolation also had been non exact, it had been stochastic before some of the regular lattices were found to have exact values of critical probability. If exact values can come out of percolation, 'Why can't a similar thing happen in language?', assuming both percolation and language are now related via the common mechanism of cluster formation.

We are segregated in through groups by the languages we use. Therefore an English mathematician is in the language of his profession at sixes and sevens, with the majority of his fellow countrymen because he thinks in Mathematics most days of his life, and even with British engineers because while the latter think in Partial Differential Equations and one-to-one mappings the former tends to think in terms of Rings and isomorphism. The interrelationship among the various tongues of science and languages which are used to announce scientific thoughts in general is the reason behind the increasing number of interdisciplinary courses, for example Computer Science and Mathematics, and Mathematics with, Business and Management, modern languages, Philosophy, Physics, or Statistics. It is well known that Mathematics are languages and one can talk about, for instance, the *language of trees and graphs* (U. of Man., 2000).

An English engineer who graduated from a university in Russia will think of himself as an alumni of England, Russia, and Engineering. He will feel that he belong to all these three different cultures, either together at the once or more likely alternately among them. Likewise I feel myself an alumni of Lanna, New Zealand, Thailand, and England; and I feel a compassion towards fellow engineers no matter where in the world they are simply because I am an engineer and therefore share with them at least one language in common. Mathematics is a most wonderful language. With it we can achieve a sustainable globalisation at least as far as technologies are concerned. Obviously there were not enough engineers and mathematicians when we built the Tower of Babel.

This same feeling which leads us to feel that we belong to certain groups also makes us feel alien to other groups whose languages we do not know, or conversely feel that people in these groups are alien to us.

As far as I know, this is the mother of all racism and misunderstandings. One superpower who writes from left to right hates another who writes from top down. Neither of them can feel themselves at east with certain people who writes from right to left; the former bombs and burns some buildings of these people who return the deeds with equal hostility. When put this way it may all sound so imbecile, but I do not think the whole idea is absurd.

Mathematicians and pianists are men like us. If we realise how things will run its own course once our language is correctly set up such that it is in-tune with the language in question, we will know how close we always are to the reconciling with our enemies. Leonardo da Vinci wrote with his left hand as many people do in his time, and he wrote in Latin like most educated people did. The only difference is that he wrote not only with his left hand but also from right to left. You have to look at his writings in a mirror to be able to read them, though it should not be difficult to get used to reading the original as is. From this it is then easy to see that English, too, can be written from right to left if we have the mind to. In the case of Chinese, when properly written it goes from top to bottom with the subsequent lines built leftwards and in layers, but one now finds it being written more and more often using the western and international structure, that is going from left to right and then gradually moving downwards in layers. However, when it comes to reading a sign you had best be prepared to read from right to left as you do Arabic and Hebrew. The reason is obvious if you think of writing from right to left as writing from top to bottom and then move to the left to write the next line when, in this case, each line contains only a single character. My reasoning, that language at the same time creates and bridges cultural gaps, is not different from what Edward Morgan Forster (1879 – 1970) means when he says, 'only connect,' and make this the theme of one of his book†. It is amazing how, for instance, a first year student in Astrophysics may already identify himself with physicists, having not even begun to learn his subject, and how he already seems esoteric to other people. And if we only think that when he finally graduates after two years of reading subjects in Astrophysics at half pace, he already belongs to another world, then we must wonder what languages can do to us.

One of the things that make translation interesting pastimes is the false friends one comes across. One can have false friends across two or more languages, within the same language, or even among jargon of different fields within one or more language. In french they are called

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† E M Forster. *Howards End.* 1910

faux amis. Examples of these are, *la déterminant* means the determinant, but *la détermination* is the solution; *pouvoir* to be able to, but *pourvoir* provide.

False friends can be philosophical and at times enlightening, for example *Fr. le hasard* means `chance` or `luck` and *Ger. die Redaktion* actually means `editorial staff`. Also, *Ger. also* means `therefore`, *denn* is `because` and if one wants to say `then` then one uses *dann* because that what it means.

Many of the characteristics of English is German, for example *Ger. wo* is `where` and *bei* is `by`, consequently we have *wobei*, which is `whereby`.

As language changes, evolves and develops, the best thing to do when translating an old text is to use a dictionary of the language of the period contemporary to it. The older the manuscript is, the more one should think of it as being different from the modern language. Systematic changes in spelling is not unusual. Many words in German have changed *th* in their spelling into *t*, for example *der Wert*, value (`Werth`). Good modern dictionaries usually list obsolete meanings, but most probably would not give old spellings.

As example of an obsolete meaning, *Fr.* `renfermer` used to mean *to contain.* It now means *to conceal.*

The number of different meanings of each word in a language can be thought of as being the coordination number of that word. Therefore if we define all things in terms of their attributes and represent these by generators or nuclei in Voronoi networks, then everything can be represented by the vertices in this n-dimensional space. In this way one can represent everything in any universe as points in the space of attributes. One can increase the number of attributes one will take into account. The higher is this number, the more vertices one obtains. As the number of attributes increases, some of the vertices split into different ones. Two adjacent vertices is differentiated from each other by a single attribute.

The number of attributes is equal to the number of dimensions, which is n. Not every vertex will split when n is increased. Those having nothing to do with the new attribute, in other word dimension, added will remain the same. All members of any d-polytope, $d < n$, share exactly d attributes among one another. Though the case when $d = n$ could be mathematically termed as a *trivial* case, which represents the interrelationship among all things, in reality it is a set of entities which includes everything in the strictest sense within it, *i.e.* all real and imaginary things. Notice that, although the number of dimensions may be high, the space being considered is a Euclidean one. Also, the points in this space are sparsely distributed in general, and the higher

the dimension, the more sparsely populated the the space becomes.

On the other hand if one pays attention to words instead of attributes, one may represent them as entities or nuclei within some n-dimensional networks. One is not restricted to put only one language into this imaginary space. In fact, one can put all the words in all languages of the universe into it. Contrary to the previous case of attribute space considered, in this case the number of dimensions n can be arbitrarily chosen and is not affected in any way no matter how many languages or how many words one has in, or later adds to, the space.

Since it is always possible to choose n to be comparatively low, this second space is generally a topological one where only connections between words count, disregarding the winding or tortuosity of the paths. Two words which are synonyms to each other are connected by a line which intersects no other lines. The number of lines connected to a word represents the *coordination number* Cn of that word. Generally speaking, Cn's of nouns are small compared with those of verbs and prepositions, the latter probably taking the lead.

Because there are more than one lines representing the same meaning among three or more words, more precisely the number of lines equals to the number of words involved, this approach therefore necessarily leads to redundancy.

To be more computationally economic, instead of the word-centred connections just considered, one may consider tessellation of space in n-dimensions by partitions whose centres are all things, both material and abstract. One needs not choose n as high as in the case of the space of attributes, but can simply choose any arbitrary integer $n \geq 2$. Now the words are represented as vertices and the space is topological. If one links every vertex to its nucleus, then one obtains a network where Cn of a vertex represents the number of different meanings of a word, while Cn of a nucleus represents the number of words, both inter- and intra-lingual, which are synonyms among one another. If one chooses to keep accounts of three database files, one for each of the following files which respectively contain words, things (or their representation), and mapping or cross-links among items between the first two files, then presumably one has reduced the space and retrieval time requirements to the minimum possible. This is the idea behind most of the database methods, described in graphical, geometrical, topological, and tessellational context.

One possible application of this visualisation is in the compilation of dictionaries. If one were to put all the languages of the world into three such files, and then add only one more attribute to each of the words in the word-file, namely the name of the languages it comes from, then in

theory one would be able to immediately compile a dictionary between any two languages one may wish to.

That is, of course, provided that one assumes that it is always possible to do the translation purely in terms of equivalence among words and expressions, without having to resort to any lengthy description. Though this may seems to be a heavy requirement at first sight, it is actually not so as we will see.

I maintain that whenever one translates, one summarises. And since there is no limit to the number of ways that one can summarise, by the reason of free will of the human mind, one will always be able to find equivalences to any translatable thing from among all the expressions and words in a language.

If we suppose that the contrary is true, in other words that one can not accept summarised word or expression as equivalent meaning of another word or expression. Then it would become almost impossible to translate anything except perhaps a few nouns. It would not be possible, for example, to find anything that means *must* or *have to* from the rich pool of Japanese vocabularies, because no such word exists. Instead of saying that one must do something, in Japanese one can only say that the idea that one may not do something will not be realised. One must opts for the form *V-nakerebanaranai*, *nakereba* following the verb stem being the conditional form of the verb and *naranai* means `will not become`, thus `that I will not get married will not do` or `it is out of question that I will not get married`. Therefore if one is not to refute the majority, if not most, of the translations made from Japanese into English to date, one necessarily needs to refute the supposition above instead. Therefore, by *reductio ad absurdum* the original statement is proved.

Then one also needs to include in the word file expressions, for example *at sixes and sevens*, as well as phrasal verbs and many other combinations of words some of which are characteristics to the particular languages considered. This is by no means too difficult a thing to do, because anyone who considers himself familiar with a certain language will consider these things of that language as much entire units as individual words, if not even more so. It is in a certain way true that, when one is young one thinks in terms of words, as one gets older one tends to think more and more in terms of expressions.

An additional fourth file containing a mapping list of all words of each languages could help facilitate or streamline the retrieval and the compilation, but can not be considered as an essential, the core files being the three files already mentioned.

My career as a translator can be traced back to the year 1988 during

my third year at the Chulalongkorn University in Thailand where I read Mineral and then Electrical Engineerings. I used to translate technical papers, mainly IEEE's, inside my head and read aloud the translation in Thai while someone among my classmates, summarising what I said in his own words, copied it down on paper. This used to be one of my various sources of income which requires less effort than, for example, teaching school children and high school students. The years 2000–2001, three years after the economic crisis of Thailand and East Asian countries, found me again translating for a living. My self confidence in written Thai has never been very high up to that time. But truly this is the case where necessity is the mother of inventions, I found myself for the first time not only translating Japanese, German, Portuguese, but most of them into Thai to boot.

I started learning German at the Goethe Institut in Bangkok in 1991, a few months after having returned from my traineeships with Ganzinform in Budapest through AIESEC. I got an *A* from a course in German literature that I took at TIT in 1997. This good result owes much to Professor Ishikawa himself who exceptionally allowed my report to be written in English, as I doubt whether I could have written it half as well in Japanese. In a way, this report summarises what I have learnt in that course as well as my experience doing a Sixth Form English at Ashburton College, New Zealand.

Having planned to do a PhD in translation studies and changed to chemical engineering by November 2000, I still attended some of the seminars organised by the translation group at the Centre of Computational Language during the first half of 2001. The talk given by Michael Hoey from the University of Liverpool was quite interesting. He studies translation and represents repetitions by bonds. Considering each sentence and number them, he then count the bonds in each of them and see how they increase or decrease in the process of translation. These bonds or repetitions are defined to be the one to one correspondences between the source and the target texts. He divides repetitions in any language into eleven different kinds described as *simple* (`planet`, `planets`), *complex* (`planet`, `planetary`), *pro-forms* (`planets`, `they`), *simple paraphrase* (`path`, `track`), *co-reference* (`Clinton`, `the American President`), *ellipsis* (`some astronomers`, `one` $\emptyset$), *particular-general* (`Plato`, `planet`), *complex paraphrase* (`solar`, `sun`), *closed set* (`Pluto`, `Neptune`), *antonym* (`small`, `massive`), and *representative-represented* (`Russia`, *Mr Yeltsin*).

In my idea, no less interesting is to consider each word as a vertex with bonds linking it with another neighbouring ones. Neighbours in this sense are not locational Euclidean ones since words very far apart in one context can become close together in another, for example an

eye and an eye of a needle. The coordination number is then the total number of bonds connecting to that word vertex. One can hardly find a completely one to one mapping across languages to be certain, because neither the coordination number nor the neighbourhood of the words translated would stay the same. One interesting thing is to find out whether there is any pattern of change in the coordination number when one translates. No less interesting is to find out whether one can predict an expected coordination number of texts in a certain context, for example whether it is true that scientific writings have lower coordination numbers than literatures. A typical process of translation concentrates on vertices, that is to say, words. Would it not be better if the emphasis is made on the links or bonds instead? Creating a table of bonds may require some work but it will help towards the speed and quality of the translation in the long run since translating bonds is easier to do than translating vertices. Moreover, it is a more accurate because by definition bonds are those things which the vertices represent.

Derivatives of two different words can be neighbours among themselves, but they are not neighbours to their parents since they function differently. For example, an adjective derived from a noun is not usually a neighbour of that noun. Words which look similar to each other are not necessarily neighbours, for example *cursive* and *cursed*, the former one being a grammatical jargon. Similarly a *cursor* is a noun and computer jargon while a *curser* means one who curses; they are not neighbours.

The three seminal papers by Voronoi which I translated and wrote as the book *Voronoi translated* (K Tiyapan, 2001) are slightly different from the version included in my other book *Percolation within percolation and Voronoi Tessellation* (K N Tiyapan, 2003). For one thing, in the latter three there is no words 'vertice'. That word is used in the book to mean v_i, where i is some integer, as contrasted with a vertex, say v_3, with a definite integer assigned, and vertices, for example when addressing v_1, v_2 and v_3 together. The word *vertice* actually exists in the Latin language as a declension of the word *vertex*, though its meaning there is not directly related to the sense that I used for the translation in my book. Some authors, however, unknowingly use *vertexes* (*cf* Pujara and Shanbhag, 1992) which is nowhere to be found in the original Latin. If their use is deliberate and if it is not an American spelling, then their reason for using this spelling is beyond me. *Vertex* should not have the same plural form as *sex* because in Latin the former is in the third, while the latter the second declension. *Vertex* is the nominative form

L R Pujara and Naresh Shanbhag. Some stability theorems for polygons of polynomials. *IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control.* Vol. 37, No. 11, 1845 – 1849. November 1992.

and is declined as *sg.nom.* and *voc.* vertex, *acc.* vertic*em*, *gen.* vertic*is*, *dat.* vertic*ī*, *abl.* vertic*e*, *pl.nom.*, *voc.* and *acc.* vertic*ēs*, *gen.* vertic*um*, *dat.* and *abl.* vertic*ibus*, while *sex* is the stem the singular nominative form of which is *sexus* which is declined as *sg.nom.* sex*us*, *voc.* sex*e*, *acc.* sex*um*, *gen.* sex*ī*, *dat.* sex*ō*, *abl.* sex*ō*, *pl.nom.* and *voc.* sex**ī**, *acc.* sex**ōs**, *gen.* sex**ōrum**, *dat.* and *abl.* sex**īs**. Since the spelling check of the program *emacs* thinks that *vertexes* is correct, perhaps it is an American spelling. Another difference is that I used the word *integer* here in places where the term *integral number* is used in the book. The latter is closer to what Voronoi has written. Many authors use the term *integer number*, for example Fred Hoyle and many of the Cambridge physicists. The reason is obvious, that is to avoid a possible confusion between the integral in this sense and the integrating *integral*.

Even though there are many translation machines available and machine translation is commonly used to produce the first translated draft which greatly speeds up the process, especially in a more straight forward work or in a commercial setting, translation is more an art than a science. Generally speaking, a translation is a mapping which is many to many, since on the one hand the original text can be interpret in many different ways and on the other there are many possible ways to put each of these interpretations into words in the target language. Even for those who argue that it is science, the nature of this science must necessarily be inexact.

Writing system, on the other hand, is isomorphic and therefore exact. If we represent a writing system by a function $\aleph(\cdot)$, then we have the following systems some of which is my own adaptation and therefore differs sometimes from the reference given. The convention I use is $\aleph(\text{Language}) = \{[\text{alphabets}], (\text{vowels}), \langle\text{accented characters}\rangle\}$. Note also that some of the alphabets which come with an inherent accent are not considered accented alphabets.

The 72 countries which participate in the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002 are listed in Table 1 together with their languages.

Table 1 *Commonwealth countries and their languages*

Country (population), main languages
Anguilla (12,132), English
Antigua and Barbuda (66,970), English, local dialects
Australia (18,950,108), English, about 50 Aboriginal languages
Bahamas (297,852), English, Creole
Bangladesh (131,269,860), Bangla, English, Urdu
Barbados (275,330), English, Bajan
Belize (241,546), Creole, English, Spanish, Mayan, Garifuna

Bermuda (62,912), English, Portuguese
Botswana (1,479,039), Setswana, various Bantu and Khosesan languages, English
Brit. Virgin Islands (20,812), English
Brunei (343,653), Malay, English, Chinese
Canada (31,330,255), English, French, German, Italian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Spanish
Cameroon (15,891,531), 24 major African language groups, English, French
Cayman Islands (35,527), English
Cook Islands (20,407), Maori, English
Cyprus (762,887), Greek, Turkish
Dominica (70,786), French patois, English
England (49,495,000), English, Panjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Cantonese, Patois Bengali and others
Falkland Islands (2,826), English
Fiji (823,376), Fijian, Hindustani, (Fiji Bat), English
Gambia (1,381,496), Mandinka, Wolof, Fulfulde, English, French
Ghana (19,271,744), Twi, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Huasa, English
Gibraltar (29,272), Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, English, Russian
Grenada (89,227), French-English-African patois, English
Guernsey (64,080), English, French
Guyana (703,399), English, Hindi, Urdu, Native American dialects
India (1,029,991,145), Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Kannada, Oriya, Malayalam, Punjabi, Assamese, Sanskrit, English, and over 16,00 dialects
Isle of Man (73,117), English, Manx Gaelic
Jamaica (2,665,636), Patois (Creole), English
Jersey (88,915), English, French, Norman-French dialect
Kenya (29,250,541), Kiswahili, local languages, English
Kiribati (87,025), Gibertese (I-Kiribati), English
Lesotho (2,166,520), Sesotho, English, Zulu, Xhosa
Malawi (10,154,299), Chichewa, Bantu languages, English
Malaysia (22,229,040), Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese dialects, Tamil, various local languages, English
Maldives (310,764), Divehi, Arabic, Hindi, English
Mauritius (1,196,172), Creole, English, French, Hindi, Urdu, Hakka, Bhojpuri
Montserrat (7,574), English

Mozambique (19,614,345), Bantu languages, Portuguese Swahili, Makua, Ronga, Tsongan, Muchope
Namibia (1,674,116), Ovambo and various African languages, English, Afrikaans, German
Nauru (10,704), Nauruan, English
New Zealand (3,697,850), English, Maori
Nigeria (117,170,948), Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Fulfulde, about 200 local languages, English
Niue (2,000), Niuean, English
Norfolk Islands (1,912), Norfolk, English
Northern Ireland (1,663,000), English, Irish (Gaelic)
Pakistan (144,616,639), Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Urdu, English
Papua New Guinea (4,811,939), Melanesian Pidgin (Tok Pisin), Motu, Enga, over 700 Melanesian and Papuan languages, English
Samoa (235,302), Samoan, Tongan and other Polynesian languages, English
Scotland (5,120,000), English, Scots, Gaelic
Seychelles (79,672), Creole (Seselwa), French, English
Sierra Leone (5,509,263), Krio, Mende, Temne, English
Singapore (4,300,419), Malay, Chinese dialects, Tamil and English
Solomon Islands (470,000), Melanesian pidgin, about 80 local languages, English
South Africa (43,981,758), Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, Siswati, Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Tsoknga, Venda
Sri Lanka (19,408,635), Sinhalese, Tamil, English
St. Helena (7,197), English
St. Kitts and Nevis (38,756), English, local dialect
St. Lucia (158,178), English, French patois
St. Vincent and the Grenadines (115,942), English, French patois
Swaziland (1,004,072), Siswati, English
United Republic of Tanzania (31,962,769), Swahili, English, various local languages
Tonga (109,959), Tongan, English
Trinidad and Tobago (1,169,682), English, Spanish, Hindi, French dialect
Turks and Caicos (18,122), English
Tuvalu (10,730), Tuvaluan, Vaitupu and other dialects, English

Uganda (23,451,687), Swahili, Arabic, Luganda, Ateso, Luo, other local languages, English

Vanuatu (192,848), Bislama, various Melanesian languages, English, French

Wales (2,921,000), Welsh, English

Zambia (9,872,007), Bemba, Luapula, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, Kikaonde, Lunda, Luvale, English, Swahili

Zimbabwe (11,272,013), Shona, Ndebele, English, and many local languages

Table 1 *Commonwealth countries and their languages.*

ℵ(Bengali) = {[k, kh, g, gh, ṅ; c, ch, j, jh, ñ; ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ; t, th, d, dh, n; p, ph, b, bh, m; y; r; l; ś; ṣ; s; h], (a; ā; i; ī; u; ū; ṛ; e; ai; o; au; ṃ; ḥ)}

ℵ(Gaelic) = {[b; bh; c; ch; d; dh; f; fh; g; gh; h; l; m; mh; n; p; ph; r; s; sh; t; th], (a; à; ao; e; è; i; ì; o; ò; u; ù)}, (*cf* Robertson and Taylor, 1993).

ℵ(Hindi) = {[k, kh, g, gh, ṅ; c, ch, j, jh, ñ; ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ; t, th, d, dh, n; p, ph, b, bh, m; y; r; l; v; ś; ṣ; s; h; ḳ, ḳh, g̣, z, ṛ, ṛh, f], (a; ā; i; ī; u; ū; ṛ; e; ai; o; au)}, (*cf* Snell, 2000).

ℵ(Hungarian) = {[b; c; cs; d; dz; dzs; f; g; gy; h; j; k; l; ly; m; n; ny; p; r; s; sz; t; ty; v; z; zs; bb, cc, dd, ...], (a; á; e; é; i; í; o; ó; ö; ő; u; ú; ü; ű)}, (*cf* Magay and Országh, 1981).

ℵ(Latin) = {[b; c; d; f; g; h; k; l; m; n; p; q; r; s; t; v; x; y; z], (a; ā; e; ē; i; ī; o; ō; u; ū; y)}, (*cf* Betts, 2000). ℵ(Polish) = {[ą; b; c; ć; d; ę; f; g; h; j; k; l; ĺ; m; n; ń; p; r; s; ś; t; w; z; ź; ż], (a; e; i; o; ó; u; y)}, (*cf* Gotteri and Michalak-Gray, 1997).

ℵ(Russian) = {[b; ch; d; f; g; k; l; m; n; p; r; s; sh; shch; t; ts; v; **w**; x; z; zh], (a; e; ē; y; ie; o; i; e; iu; ia)}, (*cf* Farmer, 1996).

ℵ(Sanskrit) = {[k, kh, g, gh, ṅ; c, ch, j, jh, ñ; ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ; t, th, d, dh, n; p, ph, b, bh, m; y, r, l, v; ś, ṣ, s; h; ṛ, ṛh; ṃ; ḥ; f, z, kh, g, q], (a; ā; i; ī; u; ū; ṛ; e; ai; o; au)}

ℵ(Serbo-Croat) = {[b; c; č; ć; d; đ; dž; f; g; h; j; k; l; lj; m; n; nj; p; r; s; š; t; v; z; ž], (a, e, i, o, u)}, (*cf* Javarek and Sudjić, 1963).

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cf R Farmer. *Beginner's Russian.* 1996; N Gotteri and J Michalak-Gray. *Polish.* 1997; V Javarek and M Sudjić. *Serbo-Croat.* 1963(1972); T Magay and L Országh. *A concise Hungarian–English dictionary.* 1981(1990); J Naughton. *Colloquial Slovak.* 1997; B Robertson and I Taylor. *Gaelic.* 1993; J Russel. *Swahili.* 1996; R Snell. *Beginner's Hindi script.* 2000; A Wilkes and N Nkosi. *Zulu.* 1995; A Wilkes and J Shackell. *Welsh for beginners.* 1989; T D Vuong and J Moore. *Colloquial Vietnamese.* 1994.

ℵ(Slovak) = {[b; c; č; ch; d; ď; dz; dž; f; g; h; j; k; l; ľ; ĺ; m; n; ň; p; qu; r; ŕ; s; š; t; ť; v; w; x; z; ž], (a; á; e; é; i; í; y; ý; o; ó; u; ú; æ; ia; ie; iu; ô; ou; au; eu)}, (*cf* Naughton, 1997).

ℵ(Spanish) = {[b; c; ch; d; f; g; h; j; k; l; ll; m; n; ñ; p; q; r; s; t; v; w; x; z], (a; e; i; y; o; u)}.

ℵ(Swahili) = {[b; ch; d; dh; f; g; gh; h; j; k; kh; l; m; n; ng'; ny; p; r; s; sh; t; th; v; w; y; z], (a; e; i; o; u)}, (*cf* Russell, 1996).

ℵ(Vietnamese) = {[b; c; d; đ; g; h; k; l; m; n; p; q; r; s; t; v; x; y], (a; e; i; o; u), ⟨a, ă, â, e, ê, i; o, ô, o', u, u'; a, á, à, ả, ã, ạ; e, é, è, ẻ, ẽ, ẹ⟩ }, (*cf* Vuong and Moore, 1994).

ℵ(Welsh) = {[b; c; ch; d; dd; f; ff; g; ng; h; l; ll; m; n; p; ph; r; rh; s; t; th], (a; e; i; o; u; w; y)}, (*cf* Wilkes and Shackell, 1989).

ℵ(Zulu) = {[b; bh; c, ch, nc, gc; d; dl; f; g; h; hh; hl; j; k; kh; n; ng; ny; p; ph; q, qh, nq, gq; sh; t; th; tsh; v; x, xh, nx, gx], (a, e, i, o, u; w, y)}, (*cf* Wilkes and Nkosi, 1995).

In particular, in Latin I use *ae* for æ and *oe* for œ, in Polish Ĺ for ł, and in Norwegian ó for ø.

It is sad but true that not a few linguists think that *writing* is not language†. These people probably have never come across Chinese where it is precisely the writing that holds everything together. In fact it is *transcription* which is not language and which is often mistaken as writing. Writing can not be separated from grammar so long as we can not say that using 'teh' for 'the' is grammatically correct in English. It is another matter to replace all the e's with h's and vice versa, but then we will be talking about transcriptions not writing. There is only one writing for each language. For if there were to be more than one, all of them would have to be isomorphic among one another and therefore would come to the same thing differing only in styles. Language is the stuff that writing is made of, and conversely writing is the stuff which language is made of. However, writing is not always language. There are languages without writings and vice versa. In other words, the two are not isomorphic to each other.

Compare to Thai, with its strong influence from Sanskrit, Lanna is much closer to Pali. This can be seen by comparing the spelling of the same word in both language. For example, the sanskrit word *karma* in pali is *kammaṃ*, while it is respectively *kamr* and *kamṃ* in Thai and Lanna. Also, in Lanna only one *s* is used in general, while in Thai there are two, ie *s* and *ṣ*. The sanskrit *ś* in Lanna has only been later added,

† John Algeo. Problems in the origins and development of the English language. 3rd ed. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1966 (1982).

and is seldom used, while in Thai its importance is much higher.

The following pali alphabets

k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ
t	th	d	dh	n
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
p	ph	b	bh	m

find their equivalences here in Lanna as

vagġ ka	ka	kha	ga	gha	nga
vagġ ca	ca	cha	ja	jha	ẏa
vagġ ta	ta	tha	da	dha	na
vagġ ṭa	ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa
vagġ pa	pa	pha	ba	bha	ma.

The only difference is that, in place of *ṅ* and ñ we have now *ng* and ẏ. The rest are those non-*vagga* alphabets, namely *y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ḥ,* which remain the same in lanna as they are in pali.

There are 41 alphabets in Lanna,

k	kh	g	ġ	gh	ng		
c	ch	j	z	jh	ẏ		
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ			
t	th	d	dh	n			
p	p	ph	f	b	f	bh	m
y	r	l	v	s	ś		
h	ḷ	(w)aṇg	ḥ	ý			

with some other special combinations, for example *ss* and *naa.* There are 8 special combinations for isolated vowels, which are simply written here as *a, ạ, i, ị, u, ụ, ẹ,* and *ou*, the same way as when they occur as a vowel for other alphabets. In front of each of these, when they immediately follow other letter, is added *w.* Isolated vowels are called *sra lạuịa* The vowels occurring in combination with other consonants are *a, ạ, i, ị, u, ụ, e, ẹ, ae, ạe, ue, ụe, ai, ou, ọu, ọ, ao, aṃ, aṇg, aṇg, o, au, aụ, ạu, ua, ụa, ia, ịa, ua,, ụa, oe, ọe.*

The alphabet tails and hanging alphabets are *ẏ, j̇h, ṫh, ṅ, ṗ, ṗh,* **b**., *ṁ,* **y**., *l̀, ś.*

The writing of the American Sign Language, developed and used by Stokoe *et al* (1965) to compile a dictionary of ASL†, is a big step forward for the language. But one drawback is that it uses symbols which can not be reproduced easily on word processors or TEX. I briefly learnt Japanese

† William C Stokoe Jr, Dorothy C Casterline and Carl G Croneberg. *A Dictionary of American Sign Language on Linguistic Principles.* Gallaudet College Press, 1965.

Signs in 1998 in Meguro-ku, Tokyo. This language is a descendant of American Signs and has inherited a great part of its feathers. But is was not until early 2002 that I came across the symbolic writings developed by Stokoe.

This writing system looked discouragingly complicated, so I tried to develop my own writing system for British Signs. While the work for the latter was going on, I turned to look again at Stokoe's system and found to my surprise that despite its seemingly complexity it is very systematic and efficient. So I started to look at it in detail and I began to apply my experience with other writing systems to create a system using English alphabets that will be isomorphic with his, because I prefer the roman letters to geometric representations in the matter of writings. In essence, in the new system I try to follow his conventions whenever I can, in order that those who are already familiar with his system will have the least difficulty in following mine. Among other things, I avoid the use of capital letters in the middle of sentences, use English consonants for the Dez symbols, vowels and suffixes for Sig symbols, and a set morpheme for each of his Tab symbols. In order to make my system self-explanatory, I separate the different allochers which share the same symbol, for example the Dez *A* has now become *t*, *ts* or *tz* respectively where they used to be the allochers *a*, *s* and *t*. I try to find a solution which is easy to remember, for example the Sig for a divergent action that used to be represented by the division symbol, is now the suffix *~ide* for div*ide* or ch*ide*. The results are listed in Table 2. As this is an isomorphic writing of Stokoe's system, the contents of the latter would go nowhere, so it is possible to polish the system further after this and this I intend to do.

Table 2 *Roman writing of Stokoe's system for ASL*

Tab

(*nte*)	zero; neutral	*fca*	face, whole head
fhe	forehead, brow, upper face	*mvi*	mid-face, eyes and nose
cni	chin, lower face	*cke*	cheek, temple, ear, side-face
nke	neck	*tra*	trunk, body from shoulders to hips
mra	upper arm	*mya*	elbow, forearm
spa	supine arm or wrist	*pro*	pronated arm or wrist

Dez

t, *a* compact hand
ts, fist, *s* compact hand
tz, *t* compact hand
b, flat hand
bs, flat hand with four fingers separated
s, spread hand

c, curved hand
d, contracted hand
f, *three-ring* hand
g, *g* index hand
gd, *d* index hand
h, index and second finger extended; *h*
huw, hun, the *u* allocher of *h*
how, hon, the *n* allocher of *h*
j, *pinkie* hand
k, like *g* but thumb touches the middle phalanx of the 2nd finger
kow, kon, the *p* allocher of *k*
l, angle hand; thumb perpendicular with the index finger
z, *cock* finger; thumb and the first two fingers spread
p, tapered hand; fingers curved and squeezed together; *o*
r, *warding off* hand; the 2nd finger crosses over the index
v, *victory* hand
w, three-finger hand
x, hook hand; index hooked
y, horns hand (thumb and little finger)
ys, horns hand (index and little finger)
q, the little finger bent in from a spread hand

Sig		Sig	
u	**u**pward,	*o*	d**o**wnward
uo	**u**p-d**o**wn,	*i*	r**i**ghtward
e	l**e**ftward,	*ie*	s**i**de-to-sid**e**
a	tow**a**rd signer,	*ao*	**a**way fr**o**m signer
oa	t**o-a**nd-fro,	*ui*	s**upi**nating rotation
iu	pronating rotation,	*ou*	twisting
ue	nodding, bending,	*oe*	**o**p**e**ning
ae	closing,	*eu*	wriggling of fingers
ia	c**i**rcular **a**ction,	*~ach*	convergent action; appro**ach**
~act	cont**act**ual action, touch,	*~asp*	linking, gr**asp**
~oss	cr**oss**ing action,	*~ent*	entering action
~ide	divergent action, separate,	*~int*	**int**erchanging action

Other auxiliary symbols

ei, side-by-side hands
ai, one hand held behind the other
–t, repeat the whole Sig
–ts, two or more repetitions
–l, with finger bent, *i.e.* c**l**awed
–ate, altern**ate**ly by one hand and then the other
–us, new Dez th**us** transformed

–*nd*, compou**nd**ing
–*n*–, a**n**d
–*d*–, *Ger. dann*; then

Table 2 *Roman writing of Stokoe's system for American Signs*

Others are represented by accents above or below an alphabet. Let 'x' be an arbitrary letter, then x̂ and xy both means that the elbow or forearm is prominent, x̀ the lower hand held below the other, while x́ the hand above the other. If x is a consonant then x̣ means that a non prominent thumb or finger is extended or used as Sig, whereas if it is a vowel it would mean a short or sharp movement.

As a student representative in the Graduate School Council I suggest that every Ph.D. student has a tutor in addition to his supervisor. This can be implemented by making sure that every lecturer be a tutor to as many other Ph.D. students as the number of the same under his supervision. This could help to broaden the mind of both students and supervisors. Tutors can also give counsels to students which could lighten the problems of living in a city, for example what to do when your flat mate is a drug-addict.

Every lecturer who supervises a Ph.D. student should have at least attended an intensive course on Philosophy. For one thing, that is what the 'Ph.' in 'Ph.D.' stands for anyhow.

UMIST, or if it joins the University of Manchester in the future then the latter, should open its own publishing house. It is by no means a difficult task and does not have to be very big in the beginning, but it will be very valuable both to the high reputation of UMIST and to the academic community at large. University printing houses such as the Clarendon or the Oxford University Press plays an important role in distributing local works far and wide.

This publishing house should start by publishing, in small quantity, only books written by the staffs of the University of Manchester and UMIST. These books could be marketed directly to libraries all over the world. Therefore it is important to build up a network of libraries as well as to establish contacts with them. These contacts can be strengthened with the help of both the Joule and the John Rylands libraries, by exchanging redundant resources between these two libraries and overseas libraries.

This Manchester University Press should also build up another network among publishers, both international and local. Books we have published could be distributed to selected publishers to be considered for publication there. Taking several factors into account, we then decide which among these publishers should be given the rights to publish

our books. In this way we can earn the copyright fee from other publishers as a percentage of sales while reducing our costs in the publishing and storage of the books.

I am compiling a dictionary of the ASL some extracts of which are the following. I give them here in case you want to do the compilations for me. I shall never mind if you use my systems so long as you do not forget my name.

bâbâwiunandbziubiuwaonact, *n* heaven; *bamaiguwona*, *imit v* swallow; *baomaisaenaodts beicaowact v* take a picture. *baoweibaowuidiunact*, *imit n* door; *bbạono*, *v* leave; *beiguinudt*, *adj* once in a while; *beilactdodact ndtrabbo n* lawyer; *beivewactduidact*, *v* intend. *n* meaning; *bhiubowact*, *n* night; *bhiugiuwuni*, *n* day; *blimablemawiadate*, *adj* kind, gentle; *bowuenao*, *v* go; *bubuwactni*, *n* town; *Budano*, *n* God; *buenaot* or *~ndtrabbo*, *v n* lecture; *buibinact*, *imit v* exclude; *buibuiwactdiudact*, *n* kitchen. *v* cook, *~ndtrabbo n* cook; *buiyiuwachdact*, *imit n* plane landing; *buiyiuwaonu*, *v* take off; *ckebact*, *panto. n* bed; *ckebawactdadact*, *n v* kiss; *ckebawounactt*, *n* tobacco; *ckecêcicôat*, *n* coconut; *ckecou*, *n* female cousin; *ckefactdadact*, *n* American Indian; *fcasasaweuna*, *adj* pleasant; *fcasasawọ*, *adj* sad; *fcasawaenopus*, *v n* sleep. *adj* sleepy, *~ndtuitiuwact v* sleep soundly; *fcasasaweuna*, *adj* pleasant; cheerful; *fcasasaweunu*, *adj* cheerful; pleasant; *fcasawẹuno*, *adj* dark-coloured; *fcasasawu*, *v* embarrass; *fcasawianaedpus*, *adj* pretty, beautiful; *fcaťťo* or *~nact*, *n* tragedy; *feifidenou*, *n* language; *fhexawoedgus*, *v* and *n* understanding; *hhoanactt*, *adj* short (length or time); *hhuenạot*, *v* hurry; *hhiadact*, *n* universe; *hi* or *~hiuwi*, *n* hell; *himiuhemiuwactdintnut*, *n* build, *~ndbuweibuwideno n* building, *~ndtrabbo n* builder; *hunaowiat*, *v* use; *n* university; *hu*, *adj* high; *huwcaspno*, *v* dress; *huwia*, *n* Thursday; *huwiandbuiwbiuwinact*, *adj* holy; *piweipewoeno*, *v* lose; *piwgewiat*, *adj* approximately; *piwpewachnoet*, *v* correspond; *piwxuenoa*, *v* play cards; *slaslawạsp*, *v* combine; *slaslawaspdideno*, *v* coordinate; *sossseu*, *n* German; Germany; *sôou*, *adj* so-so; *spagdactt*, *n* dentist; *spahiuwactt*, *n* nurse; *spatiuwuidact*, *n v* lock; *spawiuwactt*, *n* doctor; *tracactdonidact*, *n* Christ; *tracactdt*, *n* policeman. *ţu*, see *ţu*; *ţue*, bending, kowtow; *tui*, (possessive apostrophe); *tuituiwoenaot*, many, much; *tuituiwoenu*, how many?, how much? ; *wiwwewossnactt*, *n* mathematics; *giwgewossnactt* geometry; and *xiweixewactt*, *n* electricity; physics. **~ndtrabbo**, *n* electrician. I hope this is useful. It is a start. Any mistakes, let me know.

—

A beautiful love story is born with a kiss, but it is poetry that makes it everlasting.

anonymous